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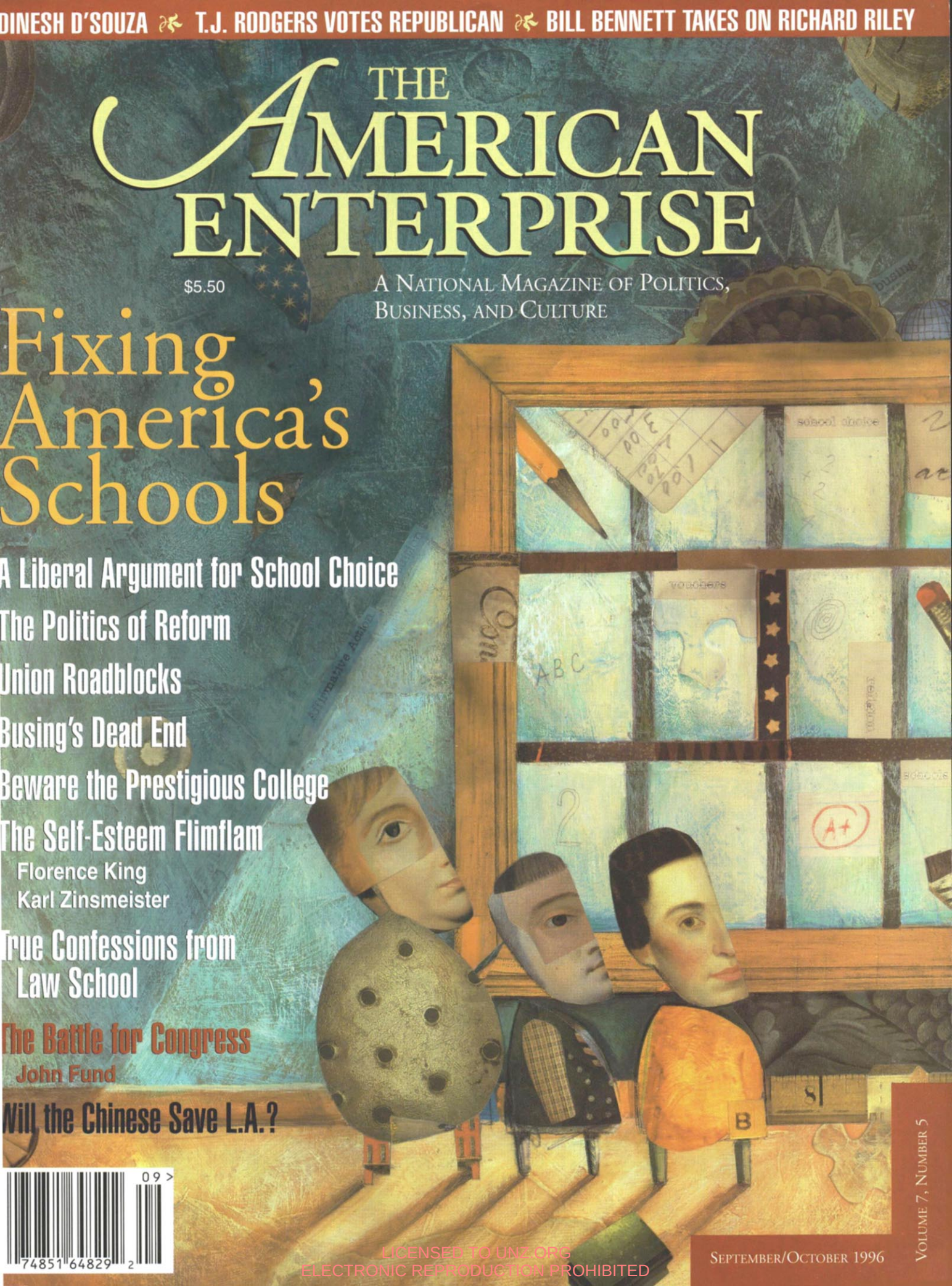

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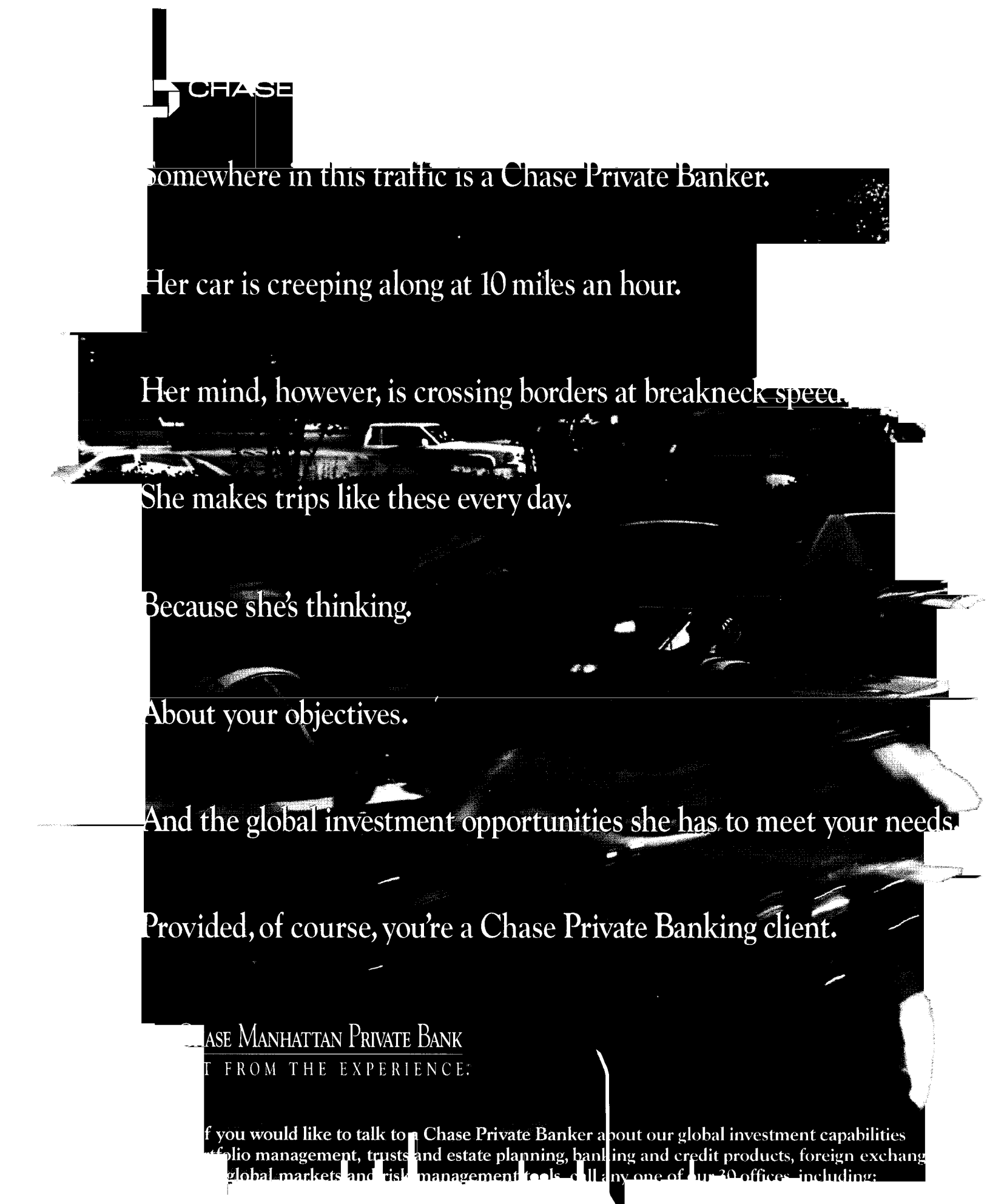

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THE AMERICAN ENTERPRISE

A NATIONAL MAGAZINE OF POLITICS, BUSINESS, AND CULTURE

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Bird's Eye

DINESH D'SOUZA

Proust of the Papuans

This issue of *The American Enterprise* focuses on education, with articles on ethnic balkanization on campus; on how affirmative action works—or doesn't work—at an Ivy League school; on whether it's worth sending your child to law school, to an elite undergraduate college, or to college at all; on the value of vouchers for parents whose children are trapped in terrible public schools; on the dubious machinations of the teachers' unions; plus a far-ranging interview with Eugene Genovese and Elizabeth Fox-Genovese on education, race relations, and the state of their union. My guest BIRD'S EYE column seeks to supplement this menu with an examination of classroom content, specifically, the way in which cultural relativism is the "hidden hand" that guides multicultural teaching in the United States.

Multiculturalism is presented by its advocates as a benign alternative to "monoculturalism." And this is the source of its unmistakable appeal: It is obviously better to study many cultures than a single one. Yet if multiculturalism represented nothing more than an upsurge of interest in other cultures, it would be uncontroversial. Who can possibly be against hundreds of thousands of American students studying the *Analects* of Confucius or the philosophical writings of Al Farabi and Ibn Sinha? The debate about multiculturalism is not over *whether* to study other cultures, but over *how* to study the West and other cultures.

Critics of multiculturalism such as the late Allan Bloom, Arthur Schlesinger, and E.D. Hirsch have argued for a curricular emphasis on the West. Arthur Schlesinger argues in *The Disuniting of America* that students should study Western civilization because it is their own. "We don't have to believe that our values are absolutely better than the next fellow's. People with a different history will have differing values. But we believe that our own are better for us." Schlesinger's relativist argument for a Western canon is open to the following objection: What do you mean *we*, white man? Literary scholar Barbara Herrnstein-Smith contends that even within America "different groups share different sets of beliefs, interests, assumptions, attitudes and practices.... There is no single comprehensive... culture that transcends any or all cultures."

THE DEBATE ABOUT MULTICULTURALISM IS NOT OVER WHETHER TO STUDY OTHER CULTURES, BUT OVER HOW TO STUDY THE WEST AND OTHER CULTURES.

As the term suggests, multiculturalism is based on a concept of culture: There are many cultures, and they are all held to be on an equal plane. Cultural relativism—the presumed equality of all cultures—is the intellectual foundation of contemporary multiculturalism.

This can be easily seen from the reaction to a remark attributed to Saul Bellow: "Show me the Proust of the Papuans and I'll read him." Reflecting a widely held view, literary scholar Mary Louise Pratt termed the statement "astoundingly racist." Why? Not because Bellow said the Papuans do not have the capacity to produce their own Proust; he simply suggested that, as far as he was aware, they had not. Yet Bellow's remarks, by hinting at the possibility of Western cultural superiority, deny to other cultures what philosopher Charles Taylor terms "the politics of equal recognition."

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Yet in the world, and in the traditional curriculum, all cultures are not on the same footing. Consequently multiculturalism in practice attempts to establish cultural parity by attacking the historical and contemporary prominence of Western civilization. To do it, activists draw heavily on leftist movements such as Marxism, deconstructionism, and Third World scholarship.

Multiculturalism is based on the relativist assumption that since all cultures are inherently equal, any differences of power, wealth, and achievement between cultures are almost certainly the result of oppression. Sociologist Robert Blauner argues that these global disparities are duplicated within the United States, so that blacks, American Indians, and nonwhite immigrants constitute a kind of Third World within the United States. Additionally, African-American scholar Henry Louis Gates contends that a curriculum focused on the great works of Western civilization "represents the return of an order in which my people were the subjugated, the voiceless, the invisible, the unrepresented."

One of the starting premises of multiculturalism is that most Americans cannot objectively study minority and non-Western cultures because they will necessarily view those cultures through the prism of Eurocentric assumptions. The multiculturalists are certainly right that our perspective on other societies is necessarily shaped and perhaps clouded by our prior beliefs. But if this means that we have no way to transcend those biases and approach the ideal of objectivity, then multiculturalism itself becomes a hopeless task. After all, if other cultures constitute inaccessible worlds, then Westerners cannot hope to do anything other than project their own beliefs onto the cultures they appear to be studying. The assumption that other cultures are self-contained and untranslatable systems, then, leads to the ironic conclusion that it is a waste of time for outsiders to attempt the inherently impossible project of understanding other cultures. The trendy philosopher Richard Rorty has reached precisely this conclusion, arguing in *Objectivity, Relativism and Truth* that Westerners should be unabashedly ethnocentric because they cannot be anything else.

The vast majority of multicultural advocates reject Rorty's position, because it exposes multiculturalism as Eurocentric, whereas activists like to think of themselves as fighting Eurocentrism. Multicultural advocates such as Renato Rosaldo and Ian Haney-Lopez typically answer that schools should recruit minority and Third World representatives who can provide valid and authentic black, Hispanic, Asian, and American Indian perspectives. In some cases, activists insist that it is inadequate for minority recruits to have the right skin color; they must also espouse "progressive" views.

But how do we know that these individuals are truly representative of the indigenous systems of thought and belief in a particular culture? There is a good chance that they could represent marginal or unrepresentative factions within other cultures, or else that they may be Eurocentric imposters.

OTHER CULTURES, WITHOUT EXCEPTION, REJECT CULTURAL RELATIVISM. IT IS A UNIQUELY WESTERN IDEOLOGY.

Multicultural advocates typically avoid this problem by asserting that education does provide a bridge between cultures, and with proper training students can be taught to appreciate the equal worth of all cultures. "If we develop a cultural consciousness and intercultural competence," Christine Bennett writes in *Comprehensive Multicultural Education*, "we may be able to understand that we might very well accept and even participate in such behaviors had we been born and raised in that society."

But this conclusion does not follow from its premises. If standards of judgment derive from within cultures, how can we arrive at an external standard of evaluation that permits us to place all cultures on an equal plane? How can we know that the moral codes of other cultures are valid for the people who live under them? Multicultural activists rely on the sleight-of-hand in which "I cannot know" becomes "I cannot judge," which finally emerges as "I know that we are all equal." A skeptical confession of ignorance mysteriously becomes a dogmatic assertion of cultural equality.

This is not to condone approaching other cultures with a presumption of their inferiority. Cultural relativism may provide a valuable starting point of humility and intellectual openness. Yet as Charles Taylor points out, in evaluating other cultures "it can't make sense to demand as a matter of right that we come up with a final concluding judgment that their value is great or equal to others." Perhaps a careful examination of other cultures will reveal good reasons to be critical of other cultures, just as we are often critical of our own culture.

Indeed the first thing we notice when we study other cultures is that, without exception, they reject cultural relativism. Relativism is a uniquely Western ideology. It should come as no surprise that relativism provokes sharp resistance from people in other cultures. Imagine the legitimate anger of a Muslim who is cheerfully informed by a Western academic that Allah's teachings are true *for him*, when he deeply believes that they are universal principles.

The influential anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss recognized that many Third World peoples are happy to acknowledge the temporary backwardness of their cultures in order to gain access to Western ideas and technology. In a stunning admission, Lévi-Strauss writes, "The dogma of cultural relativism is challenged by

continued on page 77

This issue of The American Enterprise *was commissioned by Karl Zinsmeister and edited by Scott Walter, with assistance from Martin Morse Wooster and guest editors Sheldon Richman and James Crawford.*

This installment of BIRD'S EYE *is written by Dinesh D'Souza, John M. Olin research fellow at the American Enterprise Institute and bestselling author of* Illiberal Education.

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"After a while, nothing helped my knees. I had to have something done."

WALTER J. PERRY
NEW YORK, NEW YORK

Walter "The Buzzard" Perry says he
be a songwriter. In fact, he carried his
him on the Italian front during
and serenaded his platoon. But
started singing a different kind

It all began with an aching and
knees. Some days he couldn't stay at
pain was so bad. He even fell in the
couldn't get up on his own. "I just
home–shut in," he remembers. "It

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Sidelights

Sen. **Kent Conrad** (D-N.D.) attacked legislation lowering federal payments for barley, saying on the Senate floor, "This is an economic disaster" to people "who plant barley in this country—barley that goes into making beer.... You have to have beer. If you do not have beer, what kind of a country have you got?" ❧ A Bible-quoting contest turned ugly when a man bested by **Gabel Taylor** admitted Taylor did "know more" and shot him. ❧ Republican legislators in California want to make schools pay for grade inflation: If students earn a *B* average or better in public high school but still require remedial courses when they reach college, their high schools would have to help pay for the courses. ❧ Writing in the homosexual journal *The Advocate,* bisexual provacateur **Camille Paglia** calls progressive sex education "a disastrous failure." "Incursions by counselors who force psychologically shaky adolescents into premature declarations of sexual orientation should be re-evaluated," and "the orthodox religious view must be fairly represented." · · · A questionnaire distributed to Massachusetts public school students sought to sensitize them to the plight of homosexuals using questions like, "If you have never slept with someone of the same sex, how do you know you wouldn't prefer that?" ❧ Education critic **Thomas Sowell** received a letter from a Montana teacher who repeatedly attacked him as "nieve." ❧ "I don't think there is such a thing as self-esteem," radio talk show host **Laura Schlessinger** says. "People talk about it like it's their liver or intestine. Don't worry so much about your self-esteem. Worry about your character." · · · Officials at Christopher Columbus Middle School—whose new computers and much-improved test scores were cited by President **Clinton** in his $2 billion program to put computers in every classroom—insist their success comes not from high-tech gadgetry but from longer class times, dress codes, behavior codes, and other old-fashioned practices. · · · "Things have been turned so upside down that any young black people today who speak correct English and get *A*s in school" are called "white," complains movie director **Spike Lee**. "That's amazing how ignorance has somehow been marketed." ❧ A recent Census Bureau study reports the number of U.S. businesses owned by Asians and Pacific Islanders increased 56 percent from 1987-92, while receipts increased 163 percent to $96 billion.

St. Bonaventure University in upstate New York dismissed 22 white male professors in the spring of 1994, 18 of them tenured, to bolster the proportion of women faculty members. · · · **Thomas Bird**, professor of Yiddish and long-time advocate for Soviet Jewry, quit his new post as head of Queens College's Jewish studies program after being attacked as unfit because he is a Gentile. ❧ Columnist **Richard Grenier** thinks anyone who can't understand why the Virginia Military Institute wants to stay all-male couldn't understand why Virginia would never fund an all-female boxing academy. · · · Another wag attacks the idea that sex discrimination is no different from racial discrimination by saying that if you can't understand the difference between an all-white school and an all-male school, you must not understand the difference between segregating bathrooms by race and segregating them by sex. · · · Philanthropists had been planning to help establish a government school for underprivileged girls in Harlem, but the New York ACLU has warned it will sue to prevent it, on the grounds of the Supreme Court's VMI decision. ❧ Relativism isn't just popular with college professors. When **Craig Livingstone**—the now-unemployed White House security chief—reportedly lashed out at a White House FBI agent for testifying in the travelgate trial of **Billy Dale**, the agent replied he'd merely told the truth. "The truth?" Livingstone is said to have sneered, "don't you know that truth is relative? Your testimony was your version of the truth. Truth is whatever you want it to be." ❧ Superintendent **Michael Ronan** has begun a quiet revolution in the public schools of Uxbridge, Massachusetts, despite state bureaucrats' opposition. Parents of students who need remedial tutoring now receive vouchers allowing them to choose their own tutoring arrangements, and parents who partially or fully home-school their children receive vouchers to pay for school supplies. · · · Members of Congress are far more likely to send their children to private schools than the general public, with 30 percent of the Black Caucus and 70 percent of the Hispanic Caucus doing so, a Heritage Foundation study reported.

Dorothy Newton was nearly killed in 1994 when a mugger shot her in the neck. Recently, she was mugged again in a poor section of Richmond, Virginia, but got off five shots at her four assailants, wounding two. "I never wanted to shoot anybody," she says, "I'm just tired of being afraid." ❧ Actuaries at Tillinghast, Nelson & Warren estimate that the direct costs alone of U.S. tort litigation were $132 billion in 1991. Much-sued Ticketmaster notes that that figure is 60 percent of what the nation spends on government schools K-12. ❧ Retired postal worker **Thomas Cannon** sent $1,000 checks to two millionaire businessmen to honor their paying workers large bonuses in the aftermath of selling their company. Cannon said he hoped to counter the stereotype that the wealthy are "greedy, stingy, and crooked penny-pinching Ebenezer Scrooges." —*SW*

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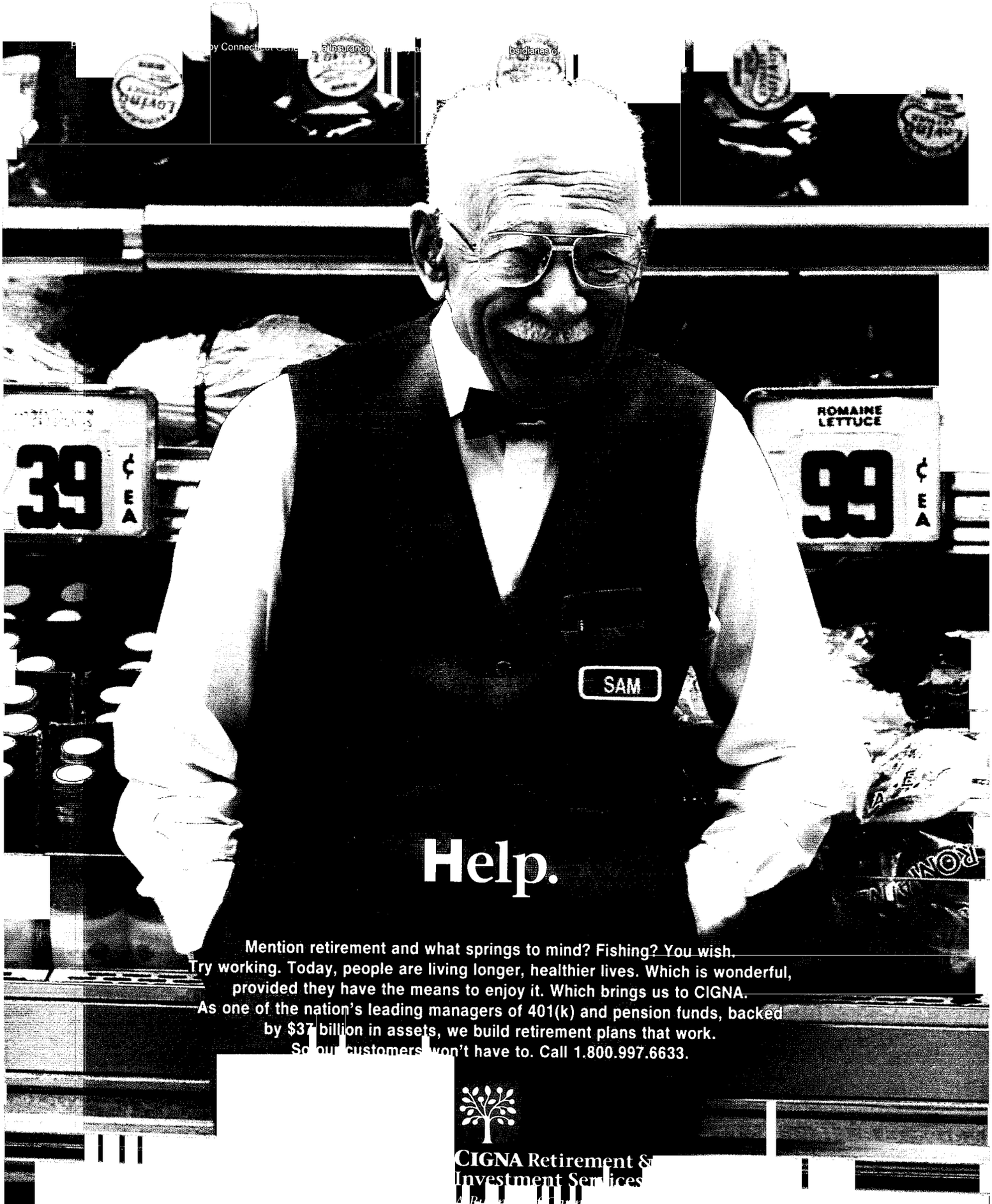

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SCAN

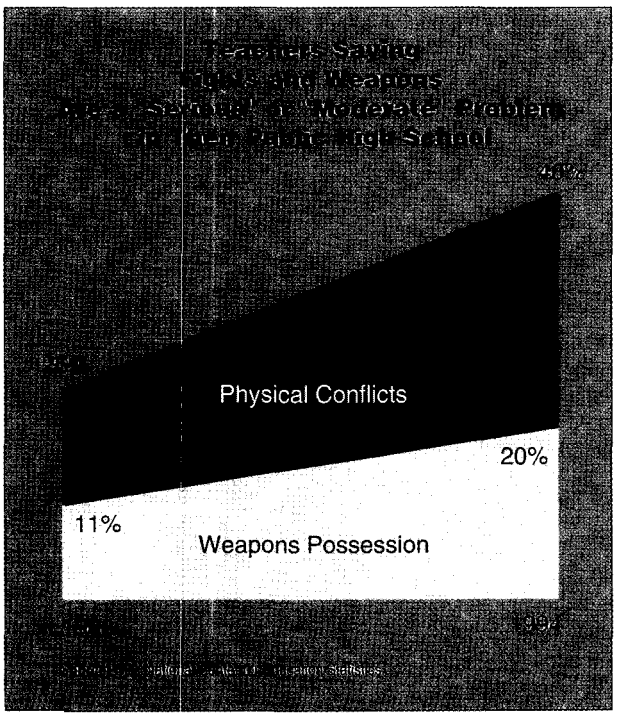
COMMON SENSE ON SCHOOL DISCIPLINE

Americans rank violence and disorder in schools as their top educational concern. Most of them believe parents are at the root of the problem, and parents agree. But an even greater majority believe that education and other officials are not doing enough about the problem in schools. They are right. There are severe limits on what we can do to shape up home life, but we can do a great deal more to shape up school discipline. Some bad policies hobble schools from dealing effectively with the problem, and a change in policies can turn that around.

Americans are united and clear about what to do. Large majorities of the public, parents, and teachers want students who are caught with drugs or with weapons to be removed permanently from their schools. They also agree that chronically disruptive students should be taken out of class so that teachers can concentrate on the kids who want to learn. They understand what many education reformers and politicians seem not to: No matter how high the standards we set, no matter how good the curriculum, the teaching and the materials, if we allow one or two chronically disruptive students to stay in class and ruin the opportunity for other students to learn, we can forget about achieving world-class standards.

We can also forget about teaching youngsters important lessons about responsibility and justice. We hear often from parents and teachers about administrators who not only fail to punish disruptive kids but buy them off with privileges, all the way from sweets and music in time-out rooms, to getting out of assignments, to ordering teachers to ease up on the behavioral and other standards they hold those students to. It's a perverse lesson for students: Doing bad does you no harm or gets you the goods, while doing good gets you nothing.

Liberals and conservatives share the blame for poor policies on school discipline or indifferent enforcement. Many liberals are now so preoccupied with the relative handful of students who are violent or chronically disruptive that regular students aren't on their radar screens. Troubled kids are not responsible for their actions, we hear; they are victims of society's injustice, and if we don't keep them in regular classes and schools, we are denying their right to an education and harming their self-esteem. On the other hand, many conservatives are now so intent on turning the public into private school voucher supporters that they push the idea that pubic school is synonymous with chaos. So instead of backing measures to get the two to five percent of students who are violent or chronically disruptive out of regular public schools, they argue that the only hope for the students who do the right things—the vast majority—is to give them the public dollars to go to private schools! (Needless to say, proposals to give violent and chronically disruptive students a



CRAZY AS A PEACOCK

G.P.S. Reddy, a 54-year-old retired psychiatrist, has concocted the ultimate self-esteem project: He's building a vast array of mirrors for 400 peacocks so he can watch them preen. The knowledge gained, he assures us, will help humans gain insights into boosting their self-esteem. (If, however, you tend to agree with Ambrose Bierce that self-esteem is best defined as "an erroneous appraisal," read the series of articles beginning on page 46.)

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voucher for a second chance at a private school have been met with stony silence.)

By now, the double-talk and tiptoeing around school discipline have produced a lot of moral disgust and political disaffection. Overcoming that won't be easy, but here are some reforms that would work:

- Replace fuzzy discipline codes that require an army of lawyers to interpret with clear and rigorous ones, strictly enforced and the same way for all.
- Have state legislatures require school districts to establish and enforce these codes, with penalties for failing to do so. Also, require full reporting of code violations.
- Create more alternative schools for chronically disruptive students. Good ones are expensive, but not nearly as costly as the loss of learning disruptive kids cause their classmates. They are also far cheaper than prison, where violent youngsters are headed if they don't get help.
- Revise current legal procedures so they are less time-consuming and expensive. Moreover, have judges hear not only from a disruptive student brought up on charges but also from the students, or their parents, whose classrooms have been made hellish by that student. We should also consider school-based ways of handling discipline disputes. Arbitration, for example, is a relatively quick and inexpensive way of settling disputes, and decisions generally hold up in court.

Like many educational issues, the school discipline debate reflects Americans' larger concerns about rights and responsibilities, values, and fairness. Straight talk and common sense about school discipline from politicians, school officials, and education reformers could be a first step to overcoming this nation's political cynicism and crisis of authority.

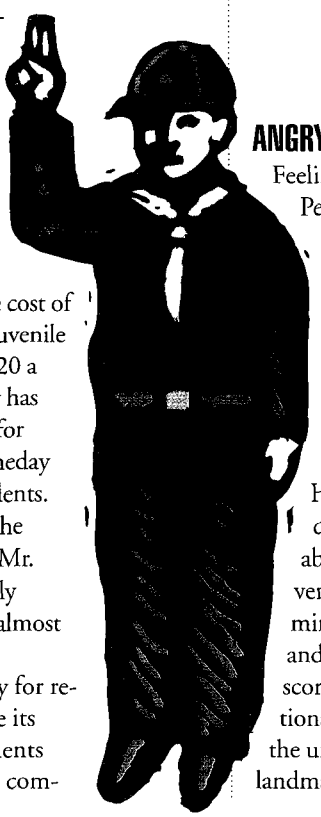
*—**Albert Shanker** is president of the American Federation of Teachers.*

SAVING KIDS FOR PROFIT

Youth Services International, a for-profit publicly traded company, has recently opened a reform school for kids in trouble with the law on an old college campus in Tarkio, Missouri (pop. 2,200). Currently over 250 students are enrolled in the school, the brainchild of Jim Hindman, a Maryland businessman who founded the Jiffy Lube franchise. YSI now runs 13 facilities across the country for troubled youths, and the demand for what the schools offer is strong.

The company attempts to rehabilitate by a program of "positive peer culture" that focuses on work, education, and athletics. The kids are rewarded for good behavior by membership in a "Generals club" that focuses gang-like social pressure on positive undertakings like learning and hard work. The program has not been operating long, but the early results from the first YSI facilities are encouraging. Nationwide, less than a third of all juvenile offenders stay out of trouble after leaving public detention centers. But according to Rob Dowis, an official with YSI, a non-scientific survey of kids leaving their Clarinda, Iowa facility shows that around half of the graduates have avoided further trouble with the law.

YSI's Tarkio Academy contracts with several state agencies here in Missouri and also has contracts with juvenile authorities in other states. The company provides dramatic economic advantages over traditional state-run homes for delinquents. YSI is presently charging the state of Missouri some $70 a day per student, with higher rates for handicapped students. Meanwhile the average cost of state-run facilities for juvenile offenders is around $120 a day. The Tarkio facility has recently been licensed for more students and someday hopes to have 325 students. The school is nearing the break-even point, and Mr. Hindman has seemingly found a business with almost unlimited demand.



Part of YSI's strategy for rehabilitation is to make its mostly inner-city students feel a part of our rural community. That strategy seems to be working. Recently, a talent show was held in town. Acts included a quite passable rendition of Bette Midler's "The Rose," a couple of farmers singing a medley of country music songs, and a tumbler. There was a quartet of extremely large Southern Baptist men singing "Amazing Grace," followed immediately by a group from YSI doing a rap song called "Whoop, There It Is." The audience was visibly moved by a skit put on by YSI kids that involved a drug deal gone bad and a shooting. The skit ended with the main character straightening out his life at the YSI campus in Tarkio. The evening closed with the local Boy Scouts doing a pantomime about bubble gum.

The chasm between "Amazing Grace" and "Whoop, There It Is" is huge, although more a generational one than a cultural or racial one, if audience participation is any clue. The distance between the Boy Scouts and the Crips and Bloods is even larger.

Yet thanks to the efforts of a visionary named Jim Hindman, some young people in trouble are going to have their lives turned around by a program of work and small town values. And at a price we can afford.

*—**Blake Hurst** farms in Tarkio and contributes regularly to* The American Enterprise.

ANGRY WHITE FEMALES

Feeling sorry for the angry white male? Perhaps it's the angry white female for whom we should feel sorry in this year's two most controversial admission battles in education.

In March, Cheryl Hopwood led three white men to New Orleans' Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals to contest their rejection by the University of Texas Law School. Hopwood—white, married, raising a disabled child, and for the first time able to afford college—was not "diverse" enough for the university administration that preferred 92 black and Hispanic students with lower test scores. The "Texan four" became a national phenomenon when they exposed the university's racial quotas and won a landmark victory in Hopwood's name.

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"The use of race in and of itself, to choose students," the court ruled, "is no more rational on its own terms than would be choices based upon the physical size or blood type of applicants."

Enter "angry white female" number two. Thirteen-year-old Julia McLaughlin from Boston, Massachusetts, is fighting reverse discrimination from the school that taught five signers of the Declaration of Independence. Boston Latin, a selective school since 1635, determines admission by entrance exam. But a 1970s court ruling by Judge Arthur Garrity requires Boston to enforce a 35 percent black and Hispanic quota at the school. Although she outscored over 100 accepted applicants, Julia was rejected. Her father and lawyer, Michael McLaughlin, is suing Boston's School Committee.

McLaughlin believes that white females at the school suffer discrimination not merely on grounds of race, but also gender. "Fifteen years ago the four sections of the exam—verbal, reading, math, and quantitative—were weighted evenly," he complains. "But when girls began to outperform boys in the verbal and reading, the math and quantitative sections were given four times their original weighting." Boston School Committee lawyers admit the changes but deny any political motives.

In the end, Julia's case is not just about an angry white female. It is about Asian students who are classified as white in the quota system and whose numbers would double without quotas. It is about roughly 40 percent of minority students at the school failing to graduate. And it is about the outrage both Julia and her father feel towards the Boston law firm Lane and Altman, which fired McLaughlin for taking on his daughter's case. McLaughlin blames his dismissal on Henry Owens, former head of Boston's NAACP, who joined the firm just after the suit was filed.

Ironically, the same Judge Garrity who introduced Boston's quota and desegregation policies two decades ago now says recent U.S. Supreme Court rulings requiring racial quotas to be "narrowly tailored" and based on "compelling government interests" mean that McLaughlin will probably succeed.

Maybe "angry white females" will not be angry for too much longer.

*—**Sarah Stock** works at the Washington bureaus of* The Australian *and* The Times *of London.*

IS CHOICE ONLY FOR CHELSEA?

Education Secretary Richard Riley sparred with former Education Secretary Bill Bennett on a recent "News Hour with Jim Lehrer":

LEHRER: Secretary Riley, would you agree with Senator Dole that President Clinton's administration has done everything it can to kill school choice movements in this country?

RILEY: Well, of course, President Clinton is strong for choice within the public system—charter schools, public school choice, magnet schools, all of those things, within the public school system. He absolutely is opposed to transferring public tax dollars to private schools through a voucher program. I think that's a mistake. I think it's wrong. It's harmful to public education. And I think it's harmful to private and parochial schools, it makes them less private and less parochial.

LEHRER: Now, Secretary Bennett, you support that voucher system, do you not, that Senator Dole does?

BENNETT: Absolutely. And I believe it is unconscionable for the Clinton administration to be opposed to it. These are public tax dollars, and children who go to Catholic schools or Baptist schools or Lutheran schools are every bit as much of the public as children who go to state-supported or government schools. We have choice in the American system of higher education. If you get a Pell Grant or a guaranteed student loan, you can go to Yeshiva, you can go to Notre Dame, you can go to Liberty Baptist—you'll be theologically very confused if you go to all three, but you can go.... Constitutionally, you can do it. The difficulty...with the Clinton administration's position is that it acknowledges that there are differences, dramatic differences in schools around the country, but it fails to give opportunity to children who do not have the means to get out of a bad school and go to a good school.

RILEY: Well, I think Bill well knows that state constitutions generally require free public education provided by the state. That's K through 12. That doesn't extend to higher education. So we fully recognize the state's responsibility, the local function, to provide free public education for all children in the state. Now when you get over into higher education, that's a whole different deal. There's no state requirement for that. So on a higher educational level, every student is on their own. We handle all those programs totally differently, but we respect the state and local control and responsibility for K through 12.

I GOTTA BE ME

Northern Virginia public schools are reputedly some of the best in the country. Imagine the surprise, then, when one AEI scholar's child came home with the lyrics to the rap song "Identity" the fifth and sixth grades had sung that day. Rising from self-esteem to self-worship, its chorus exults,

Identity is the world of me.

My own identity is reserved for me.

a fact, you se

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BENNETT: States can very well provide for this free education by providing an opportunity for parents, through scholarships, to let parents get the money directly and choose whatever school they want. Again, the difficulty here is that the Clintons come to Washington, D.C., they are given the choice of any public school in Washington, D.C.—public school choice, which we've just heard lauded—but not one school, public school in Washington, D.C., was good enough for their daughter. That was their judgment, so they enrolled her in a private school, but that same choice is denied to the thousands, hundreds of thousands of parents in Washington, D.C.

RILEY: Well, of course, when the Clintons were in Arkansas, Chelsea went to the public school and got along and loved it. When she came here, it's a whole different deal with the President of the United States and their daughter. They've got a perfect right and an obligation to send her where they think that they ought to send her. The President's daughter is totally different from all other children.

BENNETT: Most people think their daughters are pretty special…I understand the security considerations, but these have been dealt with before with other Presidents' children. The question is…Do we get real educational opportunity in this country or not? Do we say to the children of Washington, D.C., and their parents, "You just go to these schools whether they're good or bad. We have the money, we will send our children where we want them to go?"

PUBLIC SCHOOL SUCCESS

The Chattanooga School for Arts and Sciences makes a powerful argument that old-fashioned, rigorous education works. How many other public schools can boast of a 100 percent graduation rate, with about 95 percent of graduates going on to four-year colleges?

The Tennessee school teaches all grades, K-12, following the approach of the Paideia educational reform movement. Principally the idea of scholar and education reformer Mortimer Adler, this student-centered method uses a three-column method of instruction, coaching, and seminars, emphasizing student responsibility, not the pontification of dumbed-down textbooks or long lectures by teachers. In lieu of textbooks, students study only classic original texts.

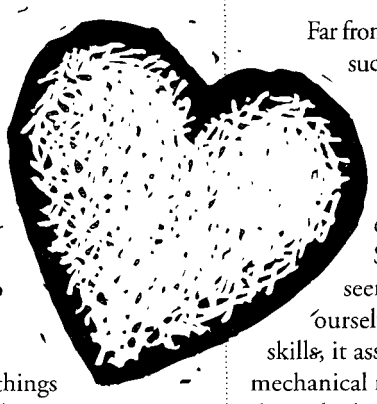
In addition, Paideia schools have a rigorous curriculum. To graduate, Chattanooga students must take a foreign language every year (including elementary school); master math and science requirements that include algebra 1 and 2, geometry, biology, chemistry, and physics; and complete 100 hours of community service.

The school also emphasizes parental involvement—parents must assist the school 18 hours each year doing anything from coordinating athletic events to standing in for a teacher if a student must be tutored.

The results—better standardized test scores and fewer behavior problems—speak for themselves. The school's accomplishments, by the way, are achieved using the same amount of money and resources the city's other public schools have. "We just do a better job with it," explains one staffer. She adds that the Paideia program's secret is to take kids of different races, incomes, and backgrounds, show them how they can succeed, and then watch them do just that.

—JD

LEARNING BY HEART



Amid the multitudinous recommendations for the reform of teaching and learning, one crucial element has been overlooked: learning by heart. This phrase is so familiar to us that we rarely notice its literal sense. Learning some things by heart means more than performing a merely cerebral exercise. It also signifies a kind of learning that touches and changes us in incalculable ways, going to the very core of what makes us human beings.

Memory is connected to character. We sense that people who remember significant details about us, or who never forget anniversaries of special occasions, are somehow rooted in the reality of life and, at the same time, resistant to the passage of mere events. Memory is our sole link between past, present, and future. The careful attention to detail developed in learning by heart prepares us for many things, but especially for the ultimate human test of preserving something from the flux of time.

By contrast, almost all current education emphasizes the imparting of "skills." There is nothing wrong with learning skills per se, but the change of emphasis suggests nervousness about teaching anything that might actually shape character. If you memorize one of the great human texts like the Gettysburg Address or something out of Yeats, you may no longer actually believe the kind of rhetoric that newspapers, politicians, television, and educational experts purvey.

Just think of the end of Yeats' "A Prayer for my Daughter":

And may her bridegroom bring her to a house
Where all's accustomed, ceremonious,
For arrogance and hatred are the wares
Peddled in the thoroughfares.
How but in custom and in ceremony
Are innocence and beauty born?
Ceremony's a name for the rich horn,
And custom for the spreading laurel tree.

Far from politically correct, to have such lines in our memory and to meditate on them inoculates us against any amount of contemporary nonsense.

Better, then, for the educrats to stick to skills. Skills are easy to sell and seem practical. When we see ourselves as merely acquiring skills, it assuages our great fear of mere mechanical repetition. (Besides, teaching things by heart is hard.) Admittedly, the mere accumulation of facts, or vocabulary, or lines of poetry, or the times table, without the skills to make use of them would be a sterile pursuit. But almost the entire educational establishment has fallen prey to the notion that skills are adaptable to the changing circumstances students will face in the modern world, while facts are inert or, even worse, soon out of date.

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This is almost the exact opposite of the truth. To begin with, without historical, scientific, numerical, and other points of reference, what are skills supposed to work with? It is not enough to say that students will learn to acquire the facts they need as they go along, when they have never learned to acquire anything in the first place. Imagine a pianist who was supposed to learn musical "skills," but never learned any actual scales or arpeggios. Scales are only the rudiments of musical understanding and performance, but you will not become Haydn or Stravinsky, Duke Ellington or Ella Fitzgerald, without having those by heart—and the earlier the better.

To know math by heart, songs by heart, even state capitals and the principal exports of South American countries by heart, brings us into direct touch with the poetry of the world. For that matter, knowing poetry by heart often shapes what the heart is all about. It is just when some remembered verbal formula rises into consciousness unbidden and we see ourselves as connected to great minds in different ages and places that we experience one of the greatest joys of human solidarity: we know that things change and we die, but we can still speak to each other over vast distances and obstacles.

Consider the alternative: a nation of skills, technical abilities rooted nowhere, standing nowhere, going nowhere. Emotions driven by immediate impulses without the guidance of traditions, great minds, or noble words.

My wife visited Ukraine a few years ago and found people who had kept their culture and sanity alive by meeting in parks at night to sing the old national songs disapproved of by the totalitarians. They were still doing it after they had regained political freedom. Learning by heart indeed.

*—**Robert Royal** is vice president of the Ethics and Public Policy Center.*

EDUCATION'S FOUR-LETTER WORD

Lord is the only four-letter word that makes liberals blush.

That's particularly true in education—both at the high school and university levels. The same students who are presumed old enough for explicit safe sex lessons, as well as condoms in every classroom or dorm room, are considered too immature and impressionable to hear someone mention God.

Thou shalt not say the Lord's name in any vein seems to be the prevailing ethos at high schools and colleges all across the country. Just ask Paul Saito. Selected as student speaker for the May commencement ceremonies of Pennsylvania State University's College of Business Administration, Saito planned to give thanks to God in his speech. But a committee of students and university staff told him there was no way in hell he could do so. All references to religion were forbidden. Some folks, presumably, might be offended.

Somehow one suspects that if Saito had wished to rail against white males he would not have been told that that was inappropriate. Or if he had wanted to give thanks to New Age gurus who helped him hold imaginary conversations with Eleanor Roosevelt's professors, that too wouldn't have ruffled any feathers. But God was off-limits. So Saito, a graduating senior, decided to ditch the speech altogether.

And what exactly did Saito wish to say that was so threatening, so pernicious, that it was simply beyond the pale for a college graduation ceremony? "I thank God for who He is, what He does, and how He has provided me strength and guidance in my life."

That's it. There was no sectarian religious talk. No theology. Not even a quote from scriptures. Just a simple thanks to God in the course of Saito thanking his parents and various members of the Penn State community in an otherwise unremarkable graduation speech.

Business College Dean J.D. Hammond has since called the decision to censor the speech "probably" a mistake. Probably? And Penn State University president Graham Spanier has said it won't happen again.

Certainly, these two might have been a bit more active in ensuring that Saito was allowed to speak. But, uh, God-willing, the next time a speaker wishes to mention God, he'll get the OK—even if it does leave a few professors red-faced.

*—**Evan Gahr** is a columnist for the* New York Post.

THEY CAN'T WRITE!

Students today can't write. No, I don't mean they can't string words together into sentences and string sentences together into paragraphs. That's old news.

I mean they can't *write*. I mean cursive, handwriting, penmanship—that little skill kids used to learn in the second and third grades, as soon as their motor skills developed. Never mind the art of effectively moving a significant thought from one head to another by means of little black marks on white paper. Kids today can't string letters together into words. They can't form ovals, loops, and humps. They don't know how to get from an *o* to an *s* or an *r* without lifting the pencil off the paper. I hope Mistah Palmer—he of the Method—is dead.

Until recently, I had dismissed my students' intimations of their scribbling inadequacy. Then a *New York Times* writer penned an article on the subject. Only at that point did I realize my students had meant what they said: They felt humiliated and betrayed for a deficiency not of their own making.

Now, for years I have resisted my colleagues' laments about the decline in our students' preparedness. We're just getting old and grumpy, I thought. Alas, I must concede that my students' eager faces deceived me into

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wishful thinking. I had long admitted that freshman composition is a remedial exercise since, in theory, students should already be able to put their thoughts into written form before entering an institution ostensibly devoted to the higher learning. But certain compromises with reality must always be made.

As for cursive, in my naïveté I assumed that students who used printed letters for their essay exams were simply seeking maximum legibility. Then at one final exam my casual mention of cursive caused a student momentary panic for fear that I might be going to require it. She wrote a relieved addendum in cursive, and I could understand from her labored, childlike scrawl why she doubted she could generate 800 to 1,000 words in the three-hour period.

Now I am wondering—*this is unbearable*—if I should use the early periods of my composition course to teach cursive! Remediation is one thing. But doing in the thirteenth year what wasn't done in the second and third years? Early retirement starts to look really, really good.

When I consulted a colleague in the Education Department, she confirmed my worst fears. Teachers say they are asked to do too many new things, she explained (I didn't want to know what), and so some old things must go. There are supposedly diminishing returns in teaching cursive in the computer age. So in the name of being practical, we turn minimalist. Only too late will children discover which basic tools they have been deprived of.

Products of our schools, in other words, may soon not be able to sign their names. On their personal checks they may give a whole new meaning to the concept of Generation X.

*—**Edward E. Ericson, Jr.**, is an English professor at Calvin College.*

POLITICS OVER MERIT

Each year, 6,000 of the most promising high school students are named as National Merit Scholars. Traditionally winners must score in the top one-half of one percent on the Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test (PSAT) and demonstrate extracurricular as well as academic prowess. Yet in recent years, ethnic activists and liberal groups like the ACLU have excoriated the program as "culturally biased" because minority students, in comparison to their white counterparts, tend to fare less well on the PSAT, a standardized test administered to over 1 million high school students as a preparation for the SAT.

These accusations, however, are specious. Elaine Detweiler of National Merit Scholarship Corporation (NMSC), the non-profit organization that oversees the process, bluntly states that the Educational Testing Service (ETS), the company that writes the tests, "takes great lengths to evaluate each item to avoid bias. I think the critics of the test should spend more time examining why these differences exist among different groups."

Most experts agree on the value of standardized tests like the PSAT, which predict freshmen college year performance better than high school grades. The "cultural bias" crowd, meanwhile,

POLS AND BUREAUCRATS BEAT KIDS

On page 33, Jonetta Rose Barras tells how efforts to bring parental choice to Washington, D.C. public schools were squashed by the usual political and bureaucratic suspects. We add two tidbits to her story, both uncovered by the *Washington Times*. First, with one exception, no Senator who voted against the choice measure had ever chosen to send his or her children to the D.C. public schools. Second, a vote for the status quo in those schools—famous for their above-average spending—was a vote to keep the following bureaucratic hierarchy in place:

- D.C. Board of Education
- Division of Human Resources
- Office of School Support Services
- Transportation Division
- Security Division
- Facilities Management Division
- Support Services Division
- Office of the Superintendent
- Communications Branch
- Legal Services Branch
- State Services
- Office of the Vice President (including cluster offices)
- Student Services Division
- Office of the Center for Systemic Educational Change
- Curriculum Content, Instruction, and Assessment Division
- Mathematics, Science, and Technology Division
- Organizational Culture, Human Resource Development, and Training Division
- Student Efficacy, Linkages, and Collaboration Division
- Office of Educational Accountability, Assessment, and Information
- Management and Instructional Technology Division
- Audits and Investigations Division
- Research and Planning Division
- Teacher Education and Certification Division
- Office of Finance and Administration
- Procurement Branch
- Budget Service Division
- Finance Division
- Food Services Division

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never explain why Asian students—many of whom are immigrants—excel at these "culturally biased" standardized tests. These critics really have only one complaint against such tests: they do not yield radical equality of results. Unless each ethnic group wins its "fair" proportional share, it is ipso facto proof of test bias.

Despite these dubious assertions, left-leaning advocacy groups have largely succeeded in pressuring the National Merit Scholarship Corporation and the Educational Testing Service to make changes. Since so few minority students perform well enough on the PSAT to qualify for the scholarships, the NMSC and the College Board have separate scholarship subset programs for minority students. The National Achievement Scholarship Program for Outstanding Negro Students, for example, established in 1964 to "compensate for educational injustice," is now used to ensure equality of results. Each year, the NMSC awards 750 of these scholarships, worth $3 million. Interestingly, these Black Achievement Scholarships constitute 13 percent of all National Merit Scholarships, which is uncannily proportional to the percentage of African Americans in the general population. In 1983, the Andrew Mellon Foundation helped the College Board establish a similar National Hispanic Scholar program.

Academic requirements for these minority programs are markedly lower than for the normal Merit Scholarship. Although setting lower expectations for minority students than for whites and Asians easily becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy, ethnic activists demand equal results now—and double standards if necessary.

Even the tests themselves have become rigged in hopes of giving favored minority students an edge. Virtually every PSAT test has at least one reading comprehension passage that deals with minority issues. These passages usually fall into one of two categories: self-esteem-boosting passages that lavishly praise minority achievements, or articles that deplore the terrible racism facing minorities today. One test, for instance, had a passage on how black female writers had to "cut through layers of institutionalized racism and sexism." Whether these multicultural reading selections actually abet minority students is questionable, but the politicization of the tests is palpable.

Some critics even claim that the test discriminates against female students as well. The proof? More male students win Merit Scholarships than females. FairTest, a leftist lobbying group, said using the PSAT was "extraordinarily irresponsible" and called for the abandonment of the test. The ACLU filed a complaint with the Education Department on behalf of FairTest, alleging sexual discrimination by the Educational Testing Service and the College Board.

In fact, the test, if anything, discriminates against male students. The NMSC doubles test-takers' verbal score while only counting their math score once. This aids female students, who score better on average on the verbal section, while boys perform better on the math section. The National Merit Scholarship Corporation denies that this scoring system was designed to aid females, but regardless of intent, it nevertheless gives female students an advantage. Of course, FairTest never complains about the "bias" of this scoring system.

This brouhaha over National Merit Scholarships reflects a larger trend in academia. To curry favor with obstreperous special-interest groups, educational institutions routinely subvert academic standards, establish racially separate programs, and accept the argument that rewarding achievement is tantamount to racism. All this, ironically, under the banner of "fairness."

—Kenneth Lee, a National Merit Finalist, is a student at Cornell University.

SEE ARTICLE ON PAGE 61

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WHAT INTELLECTUAL STANDARDS?

"The blow that can't be brushed off is the one that's self-inflicted." So writes Alan Sokal, self-professed "leftist," after having dealt a body blow to "some fashionable sectors of the American academic Left." Specifically, he perpetrated a spectacular hoax on the editors of *Social Text,* a very hip journal of "cultural studies." This trendy academic field in the humanities is dedicated to absolute belief in the idea that truth absolutely does not exist. And they mean it—not even "laws" like gravity or physical reality itself are "true." They're just "socially constructed" beliefs forced upon the huddled masses still trapped under the heels of the running dogs of capitalism.

All this was too much for Sokal, a physics professor at New York University.

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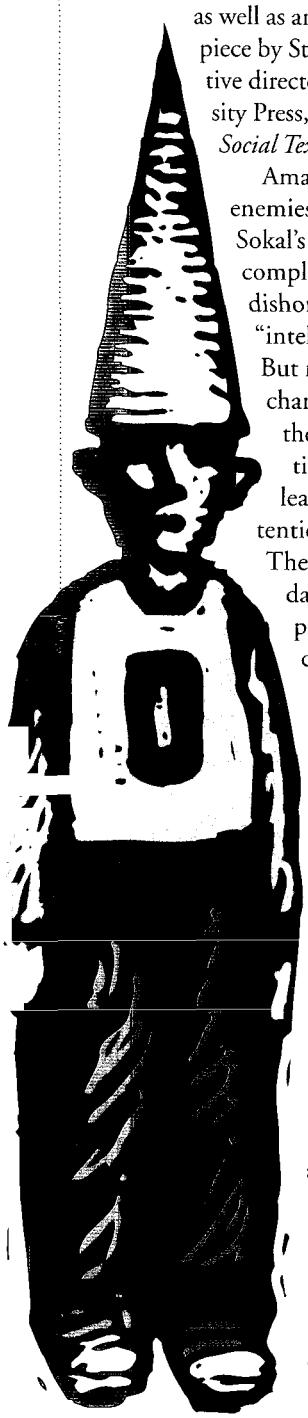
So he concocted his own parody of a cultural studies essay: "I structured the article around the silliest quotes about mathematics and physics" already made by cultural studies' leading lights, and "invented an argument praising them" with no regard for "any standards of evidence or logic."

The same day that article was published in *Social Text,* a different journal published Sokal's confession laying bare his prank. The cultural studies crowd was not amused. The *New York Times* ran a front-page story on the uproar, as well as an indignant op-ed piece by Stanley Fish, executive director of Duke University Press, the publisher of *Social Text.*



Amazingly, these proud enemies of truth attacked Sokal's untruthfulness, complaining that such dishonesty threatened "intellectual standards." But nothing they said changed the fact that they could not distinguish between a learned essay and intentional gibberish. Their intellectual standards, as Sokal pointed out, included not checking the "science" he perpetrated (obvious nonsense to any "undergraduate physics or math major"), and not requiring "anything resembling a logical sequence of thought…only citations of authority, plays on words, strained analogies, and bald assertions."

No, Sokal explained, the only thing that mattered to these intellectuals was his conclusion: "Post-modern science" provides "powerful intellectual support for the progressive political project." Readers wanting to study cultures where no objective truths are allowed to hinder a progressive political project should consult the texts of Solzhenitsyn and Orwell. —*J.B.*

VMI, RIP

The Supreme Court's recent ruling against state-supported single-sex education at the Virginia Military Institute may or may not be the death knell for all single-sex education, public and private, higher and lower. But one thing is certain: Friends and foes of the decision agree on what was at stake:

"It is precisely VMI's attachment to such old-fashioned concepts as manly 'honor' that has made it, and the system it represents, the target of those who today succeed in abolishing public single-sex education."

—*dissenting opinion of Justice Scalia in* United States *v.* Virginia

"I also don't hesitate to say that women will change VMI. Change is, after all, the point."

—*Ellen Goodman,* Washington Post, *June 29, 1996*

"The people most pleased by the court's killing of the unique institution…are people who describe themselves as defenders of 'diversity' and 'choice.'"

—*George F. Will,* Washington Post, *June 30, 1996*

GUERRILLA THEATER

In a recent newspaper article, AEI distinguished fellow Lynne Cheney named Richard Ohmann of Wesleyan University on a list of professors for whom "politics in the classroom is not only acceptable, but…a point of pride." Miffed at this classification, Ohmann protested he believed no such thing.

In reply, Cheney turned to the Wesleyan course catalogue and this description of Ohmann's American Studies course: "A collectively taught and student-organized course, it confronts the traditional character of teacher-student relations by rotating teaching responsibilities. The course challenges the hierarchy, oppression, and exploitation in modern American culture with a variety of critical analyses and alternative proposals. With the guidance of two student facilitators, groups of eight to 12 students will plan and read the course's agenda: They will educate themselves. Topics cover an introduction to current trends in leftist thought, including anarchism, ecology, feminism, Marxism, and ethnic perspectives. The class will deepen its understanding of these views with an analysis of sexuality, heterosexuality, gender, family, race, community, society, and liberalism. This course integrates the personal with the political. Projects have included guerrilla theater, community organizing, and campus activism."

Poor Dr. Ohmann. We can't imagine what Mrs. Cheney was thinking of.

CO-ED VICTIM COMPETITION

We hear a great deal on how girls are victimized in school. But veteran debunker Christina Hoff Sommers, writing in the June 12 *Education Week,* says boys may be the bigger victims: "By most reasonable measures, girls are faring better than boys. Boys get lower grades. More often than girls, they drop out and are held back. Far more boys than girls suffer from learning disabilities. (In 1990, three times as many boys as girls were enrolled in special education programs.) Of the 1.3 million American children taking Ritalin, the drug commonly prescribed for attention-deficit disorder, three-fourths are boys. More boys than girls are involved in crime and with alcohol and drugs. Significantly fewer boys than girls are going on to college."

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By Karl Zinsmeister

Indicators

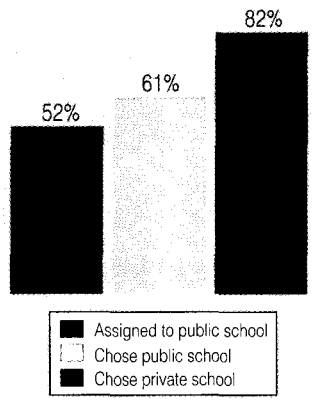
SCHOOL CHOICE AND FAMILY SATISFACTION

Nearly a fifth of all U.S. children attend a school other than their assigned public school. Some go to private or religious schools, some are homeschooled, some attend a public school they have been allowed to transfer into. Figures show that the people walking away from their local public schools are rural as well as urban, low-income as well as middle-class. Black students are actually more likely than whites to opt for a school other than their government-assigned institution.

Do the parents and children who choose some alternative school actually end up better off? Yes: A survey published recently by the National Center for Education Statistics shows that just 52 percent of parents with children in assigned public institutions report being "very satisfied" with their youngster's school. **Parents who were able to choose schools were far happier**, as the accompanying graph indicates.

Parents with school choice were more satisfied on every specific count—"child is challenged at school," "child enjoys school," "teachers maintain discipline," "students and teachers respect each other," and so forth.

Parents "very satisfied" with children's schools, by level of school choice



Source: National Center for Education Statistics, 1995.

VERY PRIVATE CHOICES

Though teachers' unions ferociously oppose any reforms that would allow other parents to choose non-governmental schools, in their own families, **an astonishing number of public school teachers pull their kids out of the public schools.**

Public school teachers sending their children to private schools, by city:

Baltimore	44%	Los Angeles	39%
Boston	49	Miami	32
Cleveland	53	Milwaukee	45
Dayton	40	New Orleans	46
Detroit	36	Pittsburgh	47
Grand Rapids	55	Richmond	36
Honolulu	5*		

Source: 1990 census data compiled by Denis Doyle.

MORE DOLLARS ≠ BETTER SCHOOLS

When alarm over the state of American schools first arose in the 1980s, the education establishment blamed a lack of resources. Earnest, concerned Americans took them at their word and threw money at the problem. Calculated on a per-student basis, **funding for public schools jumped 50 percent above and beyond inflation from 1980 to 1996.** The total national treasure devoted to education rose from about $330 billion to $540 billion in constant 1996 dollars.

The largest portion of that downpour of money went to teachers. Nationwide, public school teachers now average around $40,000 in pay for their nine months of work. The government reports that their salaries now run between 1½ and 2 times the salaries of teachers at private schools.

One budget line has grown even faster than spending on teachers: Spending on bureaucrats. Amazingly, 25¢ of every dollar spent on U.S. education now goes to salaries of non-teachers (far higher than in other countries). This covers administrators, central office clerks, examiners of regulatory paperwork, affirmative action officers, "special ed" managers, security guards, aides, social workers, and others who never teach a lesson. In many places now, between **40 and 50 percent of school system employees are non-teaching personnel.**

The explosion of new education spending over the last 15 years made public employee unions happy, but there is no indication it fixed our school problems. We might have anticipated this: There is a hefty accumulation of research showing that **spending per pupil has little to do with successful outcomes.** Not even lowering the student-teacher ratio, that favorite magic bullet of education budget boosters, does much to improve learning.

The Japanese are living proof that more money and teachers are not the keys to good elementary and secondary schooling. Japan spends 4.8 percent of its (smaller) Gross Domestic Product on education, versus 7.2 percent in the U.S. Japanese teachers are not highly paid, and the average class size is 32 students at the elementary level, 38 in secondary school —much higher than U.S. levels. Yet outcomes are impressive.

The things that matter in education, the Japanese have realized, are **effort, discipline, and high standards.** Teachers and students work harder in Japan to meet more rigorous requirements. The school year is 240 days, versus 180 in the U.S., and each day is longer. Twice as much classroom time is spent learning math at the elementary level. There is an accepted body of common information that all Japanese students must master, and competency tests are enforced strictly. These are the keys to school success in Japan—and perhaps elsewhere.

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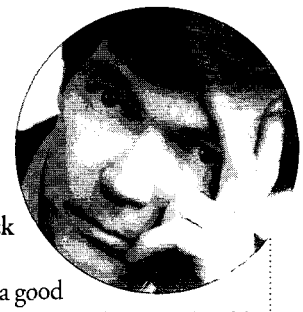
two Views

KEVIN RYAN ARGUES THAT PUBLIC SCHOOLS CAN'T AVOID SHAPING STUDENTS' CHARACTER. WILLIAM KILPATRICK SAYS THEY CAN'T DO THE JOB RIGHT.

Is Character Education Hopeless?

Kevin Ryan



William Kilpatrick

The character education of our children is fast becoming the topic *du jour*. In his 1996 State of the Union address President Clinton urged American schools to perform character education. Bill Bennett, even before the success of his *Book of Virtues*, was exhorting schools over this issue. Meanwhile, our newsmagazines and airwaves teem with talk of virtues and values, and educational vendors are moving in on the Little Red Schoolhouse with everything from cups and T-shirts sporting catchy slogans to Hollywood-produced videotapes.

Character education has hit a nerve, with polls showing much support for schools teaching core moral principles, like honesty, responsibility, and respect. Critics like the ACLU see the new character education movement as the stalking horse for the return of Christianity to the schools. Many Christians, on the other hand, are appalled by the idea of the public schools moving into the moral domain, a domain they see as the province of the family and the church. They believe the character education movement signals a new offensive by secular humanists, who have damaged our schools enough already.

THERE IS ONE BRUTE FACT THAT ALL SIDES SHOULD ACKNOWLEDGE: SCHOOLS CANNOT GET OUT OF THE BUSINESS OF CHARACTER EDUCATION. THEY CANNOT BE MORALLY NEUTRAL.

The ever-vigilant ACLU may have had a case earlier this century, when character education was little more than thinly veiled advocacy for muscular Christianity. But today nothing strikes more terror into a public school teacher's heart than the fear of being accused of "religious indoctrination." The only vestige of religion in our schools is student-inspired and -led Bible study and prayer groups.

Christian fundamentalist critics have a more legitimate concern about character education. They have witnessed the growth of a toxic moral environment in our public schools, with rampant cheating, low levels of respect for teachers, and Swedish-

Is character education in the public schools a good idea? Of course it is. Helping youngsters become good people should be one of the central tasks of the schools. A better question, though, is whether character education in the public schools is possible.

To begin with, the vast majority of educators don't even understand the concept of character education. If they've heard it, they tend to think it's some new variation of values clarification or self-esteem education—in short, another way of getting students to talk about their values, or to talk about their feelings. What character education is really about—the cultivation of virtues through the formation of good habits—is so far removed from the current educational mindset as to be almost incomprehensible. In attempts to assimilate the idea, today's educators have been forced to distort and dilute it. Professor Ryan admits as much. In a recent article in *Educational Leadership* he points out that the character education movement is being co-opted by educators and entrepreneurs who still look at education in terms of prepackaged curricula and fun-and-games activities.

Character education may require some changes in or additions to the curriculum, but more importantly it would require fundamental changes in the school environment. Schools would need to set and enforce high standards of conduct (something they haven't been able to do for decades), create an atmosphere of civility (students would not be allowed to fondle one another, use four-letter words, etc.), and involve students in service to the school (for example, the Japanese have a daily ritual of cleaning up at the end of the school day). But to do these sorts of things would require a massive change of mind on the part of those many teachers and administrators who fear "imposing values," let alone behaviors.

And, as William Bennett and others have suggested, effective character formation also seems to require institutions with an allegiance to common cultural ideals—as well as a willingness to assimilate newcomers to these overarching purposes and visions. Ultimately, we require some *meaning* to sustain our *morality*. Else why should we behave ourselves or obey our teachers?

Right now the public schools appear to be marching in the exact opposite direction—toward the worship of diversity and multiculturalism. Educators may *talk* about character education, but they are actually promoting the concept of multiculturalism. And, as it is currently practiced, multiculturalism is the antithesis of a common culture. In essence, it is the revival of the old dogma

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Ryan continued

style sex education. Given that our public schools embrace so many questionable trends and ideas, parents are rightly wary.

But there is one brute fact that all sides should acknowledge: The schools cannot get out of the business of character education. Parents cannot turn over their child to the schools for 13 impressionable years and then prevent the school from having a profound impact on his character. Schools by their nature cannot be morally neutral. Indeed, they are moral cauldrons of rewards and punishments, winners and losers, and a continuing parade of issues calling out to be labeled "right" or "wrong."

Two hundred years ago, Edmund Burke said, "Example is the school of mankind and they will learn at no other." From literature and history to the playground, schools overflow with good and bad examples of human behavior. A child's character, his pattern of habits and sense of right and wrong cannot help but be affected by the daily moral grind of school life.

While character education may have become an educational bandwagon, it is no newcomer to our schools. The formation of character and conscience were the *raison d'être* of public schools in the New World. In 1647 the Massachusetts colonists passed our first school establishment law, called the Old Deluder Act, for the express purpose of teaching children how to read the Bible, so as to resist the snares of that Old Deluder, Satan.

From the beginning, character formation has been part and parcel of public education. But by the 1960s our history teachers insisted we had no moral heritage to bequeath to our children. "Who are we to impose our values on the young?" they asked. And so for the past 30 years our schools have been value-free zones. With weakened and distracted families and churches dealing with new problems, like the exploding elderly population and the homeless, schools are being asked to fill the void.

Admittedly, the odds of our public schools successfully reclaiming this work are long. The biggest problem is that our teachers—overwhelmingly people of good will—don't know what to do. Educated in elementary and secondary schools without moral and character education and trained in universities that ignore the moral arena, teachers are clueless. Preparing them to reclaim their responsibilities for character formation is a huge problem, particularly since most teachers receive only one or two days' staff development training yearly.

The issue, then, is not, Should the public schools engage in character education? but rather, What will happen to them if they fail to do it or do it foolishly? No society can ignore the character development of the next generation. Americans are finally recognizing that we have been on vacation from our young. We are looking to the schools for help. Our support for educational vouchers largely has its roots in schools' failures to be a constructive force in character education. If the schools do not quickly and sensibly take up their traditional responsibilities for character education, the public will abandon its public schools.

Kevin Ryan is president of the Center for the Advancement of Ethics and Character at Boston University.

Kilpatrick continued

of cultural relativism: each culture is so different from every other culture that no culture has the right to *make judgments* about any other culture. From here, of course, it is only a short step to moral relativism (no individual has the right to make judgments about the behavior of other individuals)—a step that educators are willing to take.

Multiculturalism provides a heightened sense of group and ethnic consciousness, which makes it nearly impossible for schools to create a common school culture and common behavioral expectations. When different ethnic groups sit in different sections of the lunchroom, when blacks are taught Afrocentrism and whites are taught to feel guilty, and when, as happens in some multiculturally advanced high schools, blacks, whites, and Chicanos have separate graduation ceremonies, then there is little hope of establishing an atmosphere of unified moral purpose in schools.

CHARACTER EDUCATION REQUIRES THE CULTIVATION OF VIRTUES THROUGH THE FORMATION OF GOOD HABITS. THIS IS SO FAR REMOVED FROM THE CURRENT EDUCATIONAL MINDSET AS TO BE ALMOST INCOMPREHENSIBLE.

If public schools were once reasonably effective at the job of character formation, it was largely because the school ethos could be tied to the group-transcending visions provided by Western, Judeo-Christian tradition. The historical situation that made this possible has passed. Now it is politically incorrect for schools to have any special allegiance to Western culture or religion. And the ethos of the average school has come to resemble the therapeutic ethos of a counseling center.

But helping students feel comfortable with whatever they happen to want to do is not conducive to their developing solid virtues.

Effective character formation, once within the reach of all public schools, is now possible, for the most part, only in private and parochial schools. Even here the sledding will be rough. But at least such schools still have the ability to create a powerful ethos. Although they often have plenty of ethnic diversity, it is still understood that one's ethnicity should be subordinate to the more important traditions, spiritual and philosphical, that give the school its moral authority.

Those who hope for a revival of character education in the public schools argue that if it was done before, why not again. But all the evidence suggests that, short of some dramatic and probably traumatic historical reversal, that blessed state cannot be recaptured.

It's time to face up to that fact. Character education in public schools doesn't have a prayer.

William Kilpatrick is the author of Why Johnny Can't Tell Right from Wrong.

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"Live" with TAE

TWO ACADEMIC PARIAHS TALK ABOUT SEX, RACE, AND THE LONG AND WINDING ROAD THAT LED THEM FROM THE LEFT.

Eugene Genovese & Elizabeth Fox-Genovese

Eugene Genovese and Elizabeth Fox-Genovese have been dubbed "the royal couple of radicalism" by Vanity Fair. *Long regarded as the nation's leading Marxist historian, an expert on the antebellum South and slavery, Eugene Genovese has of late become a lacerating critic of the academic Left and a defender of the Southern Right. Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, whose most recent book is titled* Feminism Is Not the Story of My Life, *was a pioneer in the field of women's studies—yet she has become a pariah in feminist circles, not least for her defense of traditional families.*

As a girl, Mrs. Fox-Genovese had three ambitions: to become the first woman president, to marry a black man, and to have 21 children. As a boy, her husband dreamed of a Communist America. They got a happy marriage instead. Editors Bill Kauffman and Scott Walter interviewed the couple at their Atlanta home.

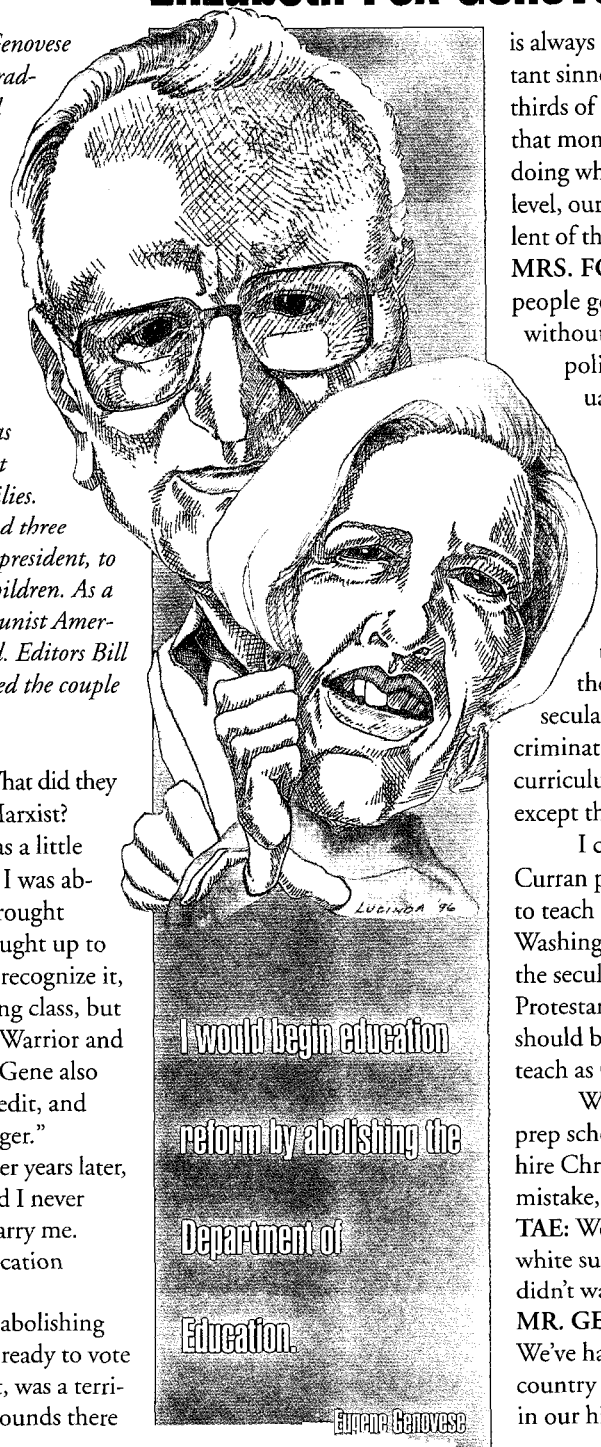

Illustration by Lucinda S. Levine

TAE: You're from a patrician family. What did they think when you married a Sicilian Marxist?

MRS. FOX-GENOVESE: There was a little initial, how shall we say, opposition. I was absolutely outraged. I was sure I had brought them the man whom I had been brought up to marry. And they didn't immediately recognize it, not because he was Sicilian or working class, but my father was a long-standing Cold Warrior and was a little nervous about Marxism. Gene also had two previous marriages to his credit, and something of a reputation as a "swinger."

MR. GENOVESE: I kidded her father years later, told him he was a terrible father. I said I never would have let a daughter of mine marry me.

TAE: What would your favorite education reform be?

MR. GENOVESE: I would start by abolishing the Department of Education. I was ready to vote for Lamar Alexander, who, I thought, was a terrible Secretary of Education, on the grounds there is always room on a mourners' bench for repentant sinners. I would also close down half to two-thirds of the colleges in the country and transfer that money to secondary education. If we were doing what we should be doing at the secondary level, our students would be getting the equivalent of the first two years of college anyway.

MRS. FOX-GENOVESE: Many too many people go to college, but they can't get jobs without college. We have a cultural elite and a political economy that has devalued manual labor and frequently doesn't pay it or abolishes the jobs.

I'd certainly restore single-sex schooling. I'd favor a voucher system. I would favor public subsidy for religious schools, while allowing them to retain their religious principles and identity.

MR. GENOVESE: One of the things that has struck me is the way in which the Catholic schools have been turned into secular institutions, because if you can't discriminate in hiring, much less the content of the curriculum, what makes you a Catholic school except that it gives you an angle to beat taxes?

I cannot get over this business with Father Curran protesting the loss of his Church license to teach theology at Catholic University in Washington. Was it really an issue to be taken to the secular courts, loaded with Jews, atheists, and Protestants, over whether a Catholic university should be able to determine what is proper to teach as Catholic theology? This is a bad joke.

We've had a problem with an excellent prep school in Georgia because they would only hire Christian teachers. I think they are making a mistake, but a mistake they're entitled to make.

TAE: Would you make the same defense of a white supremacist who owned a restaurant and didn't want to serve blacks?

MR. GENOVESE: That's a trickier question. We've had a history of racial antagonism in this country which brought on the most ghastly war in our history. It's poisoned our life as a nation.

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And I would be in favor of certain minimal *dos* and *don'ts* on that score, enforced nationally.

The real tragedy of the South and integration was that they let the federal government do what they should have done themselves. If they had started 10 years earlier to make education separate but genuinely equal—and they were making real strides at the last minute when they finally saw the magnitude of the threat—I wonder how it would have turned out. I think segregation was wrong on principle, but I'm not sure that if they had succeeded the condition of black schools in the South wouldn't be a lot better.

MRS. FOX-GENOVESE: We missed that opportunity so we are stuck with the problem of kids who come from families that don't have traditions of education, that don't have books around, who largely come from an oral culture into which television and various forms of rock music can very easily be fed.

MR. GENOVESE: The high school I went to in Brooklyn was half-Italian, half-Jewish. The Jewish kids came out of homes where education was a big thing. The Italian kids came out of homes where it was not. My father was an exception.

And in the end, I can cry over a number of the Italian kids I grew up with, one smarter than the next, who never really developed intellectually because they had no future. What was lost?

But on the other side of it, we had tough teachers who taught us. I don't care what kind of a home you came out of, you went into an English class with Miss O'Mealia—she was a bitch on wheels, but when you finished a class with her, you could parse a sentence and you knew how to read and write.

And that's all been lost, I'm afraid. When I hear about the public school situation in New York now I want to cry.

TAE: In *Feminism Is Not the Story of My Life*, you refer to mothers who "work out of necessity." Are the yuppies who place their 3-month-olds in day care buying into the materialistic culture you often criticize?

MRS. FOX-GENOVESE: Of course they are. I have enough respect for freedom, and enough horror at the sanctimonious bullying that surrounds us, not to tell other people what to do. But yes, I think that some significant percentage of the yuppie career women who are putting their kids in day care at a very early age are driven by some combination of the consumer culture and a misguided sense that they have to be as busy as their husbands. The necessity is more psychological than material; it's tragic.

These days, it's less-affluent kids who have the greater need for single-sex education, and we see that in the discussions about all-male high schools in the inner city, or all-female math classes.

—Elizabeth Fox-Genovese

TAE: Tocqueville argued that the only way you would have strong families, under modern liberal democracy, would be to emphasize sex role differences more than in the past. Was he right?

MR. GENOVESE: Why the Good Lord, after Adam turned out to be such a wimp, gave him authority over Eve is something I—well, I'm not going to suggest the Good Lord did not know what He was doing, but it remains somewhat puzzling.

MRS. FOX-GENOVESE: In order to have greater specialization in sex roles, we need something that the elite, including the conservative elite, isn't vocally, visibly giving us: a defense of marriage, especially where there are children, that really does make divorce more difficult. You can't specialize in being a woman if he can walk out with his secretary, or young law associate, without ever looking back. That's self-immolation.

We need social respect, and even support, for motherhood. We should have deductions for children, and less emphasis on deductions for child care and the earned income tax credit, which tend to support single mothers and working women at the expense of women who stay home.

TAE: Was the defeat of the Equal Rights Amendment a good thing?

MRS. FOX-GENOVESE: Yes, in retrospect. At the time I thought people who were arguing that it would mean unisex toilets were alarmist. The last decade suggests they weren't.

TAE: You encouraged the Citadel's legal team to ask expert witnesses for the opposition which they hated more, men or the South. Which was it?

MRS. FOX-GENOVESE: In a lot of ways the South has become a symbol of what the feminist elite doesn't like about men. The driving thrust of that case was to destroy the Citadel as we know it. But beyond that, to deny to men single-sex education, even if it had to be denied to women as the price, because single-sex education just might help to train men to be better and more responsible men.

TAE: Should we make a distinction between private and public single-sex education?

MRS. FOX-GENOVESE: As a matter of law, it's a meaningless distinction. There are no private schools that do not depend upon their tax-exempt status for gifts they receive from their alums, and that don't finance up to 40 percent of students' tuition through federally guaranteed loans.

These days, it's less-affluent kids who have the greater need for the benefits of single-sex education, and we see that dramatically in the discussions about all-male high schools in the inner city, or all-female math classes. Typically, the students at the Citadel come from families with combined

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incomes of less than $60,000, and in which one or both parents haven't finished college. Single-sex education provides a focus that really helps kids like that to develop their potential.

TAE: Are you a Southerner?

MR. GENOVESE: In some ways I have felt a Southerner all my life. My background is Sicilian: it's all the same. But that doesn't make me a real Southerner—just ask any real Southerner, no matter how gracious.

TAE: You've written, "Rarely, these days, even on southern campuses, is it possible to acknowledge the achievements of the white people of the South." Why?

MR. GENOVESE: For most of its history, the South was a slave society in a way that the North, which tolerated slavery into the nineteenth century, was not, because the South developed a social system based on slavery. There is a natural revulsion to that legacy. However, along with it went a very strong conservative tradition, and I think what we're witnessing today is an attempt to combat a Southern conservative tradition by demonizing it.

TAE: What insights are found in the Southern conservative tradition that are not found in traditions north of the Mason-Dixon line?

MR. GENOVESE: The main argument of the Southerners was that the social relations in the North—what we would now refer to as capitalism—were inherently revolutionary and undermined traditional values. It's the same argument Marx made in *The Communist Manifesto*, except he liked it, and they didn't.

Northern conservatism was a rear-guard action, doomed to fail; whereas, as long as slavery existed, the South had a social system that could sustain its values.

TAE: Why the anti-Southern hysteria today?

MRS. FOX-GENOVESE: There's a painful irony or genuine bad faith there: some people's history is worthy of respect and other people's isn't. It's one thing to say that slavery is an abomination; it's another to decide on how to treat the South in the wake of the War. In my judgment, segregation was much less excusable than slavery. Slavery had been the way of the world, and it was recognized as wrong at a historical moment. But segregation was artificial from start to finish.

MR. GENOVESE: You could appeal to the Bible to support slavery. The attempt to appeal to the Bible to support segregation was contemptible. And there is an interesting wrinkle to this. What made segregation possible, after the War, was the extent to which scientific racism became the vogue. After the War, scientific racism sweeps the South. It had swept the North before the War: Harvard was teaching that stuff, but no Southern college would touch it because it was unscriptural.

MRS. FOX-GENOVESE: When you bring these issues of eugenics up to today's debates, the contradictions in all of this are absolutely mesmerizing. Because it'd be a piece of cake to argue that radical pro-abortion and pro-right-to-die starts with your personal choice, and yet the next step is euthanasia, where who gets to choose is ambiguous. Not to mention sex selection and the obsession with amniocentesis: absolutely a new eugenics. The folks who push this, however, are the first to scream against any hint of biological base for racial difference, which in fact is extraordinarily suspect.

On the other hand, sex differences are real differences. So you have the contradiction of people who are defending the right of biologically fit individuals to shape who shall live and who shall die, which is very eugenicist, at the same time they are denying the significance of biological difference between the sexes.

MR. GENOVESE: We know people who are lifelong liberals, staunch supporters of the civil-rights movement, and they will say privately what they never say publicly, that one of the major reasons they support abortion rights is because they see no other way to control the number of black and Hispanic babies being born.

TAE: Will women benefit if the courts bring us gay marriage?

MRS. FOX-GENOVESE: In my humble opinion, no one will benefit, and marriage as we have known it will virtually disappear from the face of the Earth. If we have same-sex marriage, we will have it on the grounds that marriage exists to provide financial benefits and personal gratification for individuals.

Same-sex marriage is the logical outcome of instrumental sex, sexual equality, equality in sexual pleasure between women and men, divorce and abortion at will. It reduces marriage to a matter of personal fulfillment or gratification, and contractual convenience. And the whole notion of marriage as founding families, the integral unit that binds society, will be lost.

TAE: Why does lesbianism occupy such a hallowed place in contemporary feminism?

MR. GENOVESE: They run the mimeograph machines.

MRS. FOX-GENOVESE: And because it's been able to take the moral high ground of anti-male purity. Feminist theory has to get more and more radical to justify its existence; if it simply merges

> From the 1960s, when I was on the far left, I was very active in insisting on dialogue with conservatives, because there are good and bad people in all political camps, and most people are opportunists anyway.
>
> —Eugene Genovese

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with the mainstream, there's no reason not to absorb women's studies into other departments.

TAE: Do the two of you attend church, and are you believers?

MR. GENOVESE: Betsy converted to Catholicism a year ago, and I went to confession and returned to the Church about a week ago.

TAE: What do you think of the view that Marxism is really just secularized Christianity?

MR. GENOVESE: When I first heard that argument, I sneered. Over the years, I came to see that there was a good deal of truth in that. At this point I am much more in tune with the argument that Marxism and much of Enlightenment thought can fairly be considered a heretical development of the Christian religion.

MRS. FOX-GENOVESE: I was never a radical of any kind. As for the period in which I defined myself as a Marxist—I perfectly understand that no one on the Right could have understood this—it was in large part as a conservative reaction to the radicalism that was going on in the emerging women's and cultural studies circles.

TAE: Mr. Genovese, you were not only a Marxist but also a member of the Communist Party and a self-described Stalinist. Having been so spectacularly wrong before, why should we listen to your advice on matters political?

MR. GENOVESE: I am painfully aware of my mistakes, and I'm not about to put down anybody who says, "I don't have to listen to you." From the 1960s, when I was positioned on the far left, I was very active in insisting on a dialogue with conservatives. I always insisted that there were good and bad people in all political camps and that most people were opportunists anyway.

TAE: You're the only couple alive who could write for both *Chronicles* and *Commentary*. Where would each of you place yourselves in the current political universe?

MRS. FOX-GENOVESE: I am on [former Pennsylvania Governor Bob] Casey's Campaign for the American Family. I think very highly of Dan Coats's American Renewal proposal. I voted for Bush in '92, with some enthusiasm. I will vote for Dole. My primary concern with the Republicans these days is that we don't have a good middle ground between the conservative Right that tends towards Buchanan, on the one hand, and the country-club Republicans on the other. I'd be much happier if we had a more socially responsible and compassionate Republicanism, something around Bennett, Kemp, Coats.

TAE: You, Mr. Genovese, cannot tell us that you voted for George Bush in 1992.

MR. GENOVESE: I did, and it was the first time in my life I voted for a Republican presidential candidate, and unlike Betsy, I did so holding my nose and choking. I followed Clinton's career as governor of Arkansas. I never thought he'd get the nomination, because like everybody else who follows Southern politics, I knew all about his womanizing, and I thought it would kill him. But it was not until I saw his wife and his entourage that I took the measure of what we were dealing with.

My estimate of him was—notwithstanding my bad record—"This SOB is going to sell out to big business with a vengeance, and cover his behind by selling out to the radical Left on cultural questions." Those two things are my private nightmare. And that's what he's done. I think that this administration is the foulest administration in my lifetime, and maybe in American history. I think these people are moral degenerates, utterly devoid of any principles whatever.

TAE: Speaking of degenerates, both of you are experts on political correctness on campus.

MR. GENOVESE: We're not concerned about anything that's been done to us because our academic positions have been invulnerable. But if they can get away with this stuff for somebody who was president of the Organization of American Historians and all that crap, what do you think they're doing to our young colleagues and students?

MRS. FOX-GENOVESE: A number of us wrote a textbook, and after *Feminism Is Not the Story of My Life* came out, the primary author removed my name from the text, on the grounds that women in departments would veto the adoption of the book because my views were beyond the pale.

Here's another one: A student in an English department at a prestigious university had been preparing for the qualifying exam with two of her best friends. They expelled her from the group because she was Christian. I had this student in class. She's a brilliant student, but I couldn't have told you for sure she was a Christian. It wasn't an issue. But for her friends, this was a matter of principle. This is in part the lesbian thing again, because the suspicion was that if she were a Christian, she might not be sufficiently sympathetic to lesbianism.

TAE: Is Jesse Jackson a great political leader whose effect has been salutary?

MR. GENOVESE: Jackson has got himself into a box from which it's very difficult to escape. He has veered very sharply to the left, and he has never explained this shift because he was culturally very conservative in critical ways, even on abortion. I don't know where that leaves him. He can run for President and get an overwhelming black vote and 10 percent of the white vote, but I don't see how he could take the next step, unless he returns to where he started. Because what he was saying back in the '70s has a lot to recommend it.

I don't think we can just blame Jesse Jackson, because he did make overtures to the Right at that time, and vice versa. But the Right had nothing to offer. On the other hand, there are people like Kemp and his idea about encouraging people to buy their own apartments—a program, by the way, that the Communists executed brilliantly in Bologna. This guy cares—but what person in his or her right mind is going to buy an apartment if their kids have to go to a school that's violence-ridden, if they can't go near the windows because there might be a drive-by shooting, if they can't play on the playground because it's drug-ridden?

This is what I hate about the whole market mentality. These guys think that if you make the right moves in the economy, everything else follows. But if you're prepared to deal with it comprehensively, I don't see any reason that we can't get better answers out of the Right than out of the Left, because the Left is completely ossified.

TAE: So what are the elements in this comprehensive program?

MR. GENOVESE: I have an idiosyncratic position. I'm opposed to the Balkanization that's gone with multiculturalism,

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but since the 1960s I've argued that the black experience in the United States has no analogue and justifies the claims of the black nationalists that black people have been a nation within a nation. I don't think we will solve these problems without granting a good deal of autonomy and police power to the communities in question.

MRS. FOX-GENOVESE: I'm strongly in favor, not merely of single-sex schools in the inner cities—and all black, if need be—but boarding schools, preferably five-day rather than permanent. Take kids who come from destitute or single-mother families in crime- and drug-ridden projects, and give them a clean place to sleep and regular meals, physical exercise, the obligation that they do their homework, and tough love.

MR. GENOVESE: At the risk of unfairness and caricature, if you wanted to characterize the policies of the Left since the 1960s, they amount to putting half the folks on the dole in order to support the other half in style as bureaucrats who take care of the folks on the dole. And it's a very attractive political program because the bureaucrats and social workers have a vested interest in it. And all the folks on the dole can see is whether or not you're going to pay them the dole or leave them to rot.

I've never been more pessimistic about what we euphemistically call race relations in this country than I am now.

MRS. FOX-GENOVESE: I think, without undue hyperbole, one could argue that race relations have never been better. And that there may be a real gap between the politics of race relations and how people actually live.

MR. GENOVESE: There are two separate, overlapping questions. One is race relations. The other one is the condition of the black community. These times, for black people, are the best of times and the worst of times. The progress that's been made in the last quarter-century is astonishing. At the same time it's gone hand in hand with a condition in the ghettos that is wretched to an unprecedented degree.

In the '60s, when the Great Society started, I took the position that we were looking at a potential disaster. My argument was that with the new integration, the black middle class and solid working class could move into integrated communities and the ghettos would be cut adrift and decapitated. What kind of a leadership could develop on that basis?

In my more cynical moments, I think that the extent to which the inner-cities have been inundated with drugs has been the best safety valve the regime has had. If these people weren't strung out on drugs…well, I won't finish the sentence. But what has struck me forcibly in the last decade is how rhetorically radicalized the black bourgeoisie—both the real bourgeoisie and the pseudo-bourgeoisie of government employees—has become. And I think a good part of that is the terrible strain of feeling that you're abandoning the brothers and sisters. This tends to cause people to exaggerate every slight into a major problem of racism in their own lives.

TAE: Novelist Walker Percy theorized that because the South is still somewhat influenced by Christianity, maybe this time the South will save the Union. Do you put any stock in that kind of hopefulness?

MR. GENOVESE: I still threaten to run for governor of Georgia on a program of throwing the Yankees out, but much of the old folkways are going, along with the small towns, and the South is becoming more like the North. The problems that we are dealing with are now national.

MRS. FOX-GENOVESE: More people do go to church down here. More people maintain contact with their relatives and their families, nuclear and extended, and more Southerners return home.

TAE: Would that be one way out of the catastrophe of the black ghetto: a repatriation of Northern blacks to their rural Southern roots?

MRS. FOX-GENOVESE: I know Southern blacks who maintain that in some ways, life for the black community was actually better under segregation. They don't like to say it that way because they didn't like segregation, but what they did like was the mutual assistance, the strength of the churches, the strength of families, and the creating of a world that was secure for kids to grow up in.

MR. GENOVESE: Jackson made this point talking about education. He said, "My mother would see the teacher at church and she would say, 'I can't come to the PTA meeting, I have to work.' But they put their heads together on whatever problem there was."

How do you replicate something like that in an urban environment, especially where the church is no longer the center of the community? One of the things that disturbs me more than anything else is the indications among black youth of a significant drop-off in church attendance.

TAE: You're both big baseball fans. How did Marxism and women's studies affect your understanding of the game?

MRS. FOX-GENOVESE: The first thing that made it clear to me that I was going to be in serious trouble with the women's movement was back in the early '80s when I wrote a piece on baseball wives for the *Village Voice*, which they butchered. I argued that women and men are different and that baseball brings it out. Certainly women could be fans: even Yankee fans, because girls, too, could be for power, corruption, and winning. There is physical identification with the danger—Roger Kahn describing his father throwing a hard ball at him and coming to terms with it; Jackie Robinson at second base with the cleats—that as women we experience vicariously.

MR. GENOVESE: The toughest moment in our marriage was when my wife, who had been a Boston Red Sox fan, switched to the New York Yankees. I was a lifelong Giants fan and grew up hating the Yankees with a special passion. When she did that I knew the marriage was being put to its ultimate test.

MRS. FOX-GENOVESE: I thought I put it to its ultimate test when I beat you at gin.

MR. GENOVESE: That was easier to take. When the Dodgers got Jackie Robinson, I was in the Communist Youth Movement, and I almost got my head handed to me because while I wanted Robinson to succeed, whenever he came up to hit against the Giants, I would be yelling, "Strike the SOB out!" It went down hard with the comrades.

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A Liberal Argume

BY BRUCE GOLD

Most critics of America's public schools attack from the right, in the name of Tradition and Authority. They complain that the schools are insufficiently rigorous in their methods, do not stress math and science, fail to inculcate "cultural literacy," emphasize individuality at the expense of discipline, and so on.

While I agree the public schools are failing, I disagree with the reasons these critics give. Nor do I share their criteria of educational success, which amount to little more than rising SAT scores. No, America's schools are failures *because* they systematically suppress children's interests, values, and idiosyncratic potentials. The denial of individuality—the idea that everyone must follow the same general plan—lies at the core of the schools' failure.

Still, whatever sort of changes one thinks would improve the schools, every would-be reformer must consider why the present system resists change when, even by its own standards, it is failing. On this issue, all varieties of reformers can agree: The school system resists change because it is a bureaucratic monopoly that displays the rigid, lethargic ineptitude of all such beasts. As David Boaz of the Cato Institute puts it, "The government schools have failed because they are socialist institutions. Like Soviet factories, they are technologically backward, overstaffed, inflexible, unresponsive to consumer demand, and operated for the convenience of top-level bureaucrats."

The same insight comes from an unlikely source, Albert Shanker, president of the American Federation of Teachers. "It's time to admit," he writes, "that public education operates like a planned economy, a bureaucratic system in which everybody's role is spelled out in advance and there are few incentives for innovation and productivity. It's no surprise that our school system doesn't improve: It more resembles the communist economy than our own market economy."

Even within the educational establishment itself, calls for change have been heard, but they have usually consisted of little more than educators exhorting each other to do better. "The public schools have to become committed to excellence," says Bill Honig, former California state superintendent of public instruction. "The quality of our schools must go up," says Ernest Boyer, president of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. Still, things remain essentially as they have always been. With so little incentive to improve, innovation is resisted at every level of the system. Even such a relatively simple change as the introduction of a new textbook is almost certain to encounter determined resistance. And the teachers' opposition is understandable: They have become accustomed to the old text, and they are not given any inducement to make the extra effort to learn the new one.

Indeed, there is little motivation for teachers to make any extra effort, to improve their teaching skills, to learn new methods of instruction, to spend more time with a child who needs help. There is no reward for superior performance, period. Nor is there any penalty for incompetence. "The problem in the present regime," writes one observer, "is that performance remains virtually irrelevant to teacher security and advancement. Salary schedules," Milton Friedman points out, "tend to be uniform and determined far more by seniority, degrees received, and teaching certificates acquired than by merit." Some teachers, of course, are motivated by idealism, and they try harder for that reason. But they are a minority.

There are many other sources of inefficiency. To mention just one, school districts are under constant pressure to spend all the money allocated to them. If they don't, it will go into the general fund or to another, less efficient district. And if a school district showed a surplus, "the excess funds might be subtracted from its allocation for the following year.... This common policy constitutes a strong deterrent against efficiency."

If history shows anything, it is that bureaucratic, monopolistic systems don't work. That is why the school system displays "all the energy and creativity of Soviet agriculture." The first step toward improvement is to end the government monopoly in education and introduce competition into the field. Ted Kolderie, director of the Hubert H. Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs, points out that the basic question is not how to improve the present educational system; it is how to create a system that seeks improvement. For that, we must adopt a proposal made by John Stuart Mill almost 150 years ago:

> If the government would make up its mind to require for every child a good education, it might save itself the trouble of providing one. It might leave to parents to obtain the education where and how they pleased, and content itself with helping to pay the school fees of the poorer classes of children, and defraying the entire school expenses of those who have no one else to pay for them. An education established and controlled by the State should only exist, if it exist at all, as one among many competing experiments.

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nt for School Choice

CREDIT: National Museum of American Art, Washington DC/Art Resource, NY

Changing to a competitive system would not be difficult. Numerous proposals already exist for funding a system of parental choice. Perhaps the best known is economist Milton Friedman's voucher plan. Under that plan, parents of schoolchildren would receive an educational voucher from the government for an amount equal to the per-student expenditure on public schooling. The parents would then be free to use the voucher to pay for their child's education at a school of their choice, public or private. Many other funding possibilities are discussed in detail in Myron Lieberman's *Privatization and Educational Choice.*

A system of educational choice has many advantages. The most obvious is that instead of a stagnant, monopolistic regime that prevents others from trying to do better, a competitive environment exists that invites and encourages innovation. Another advantage is that it gives all parents an opportunity now open only to a few, namely the opportunity to select a school appropriate for their child. As Pete du Pont, former governor of Delaware and chairman of the Education Commission of the States, explains,

> My wife, Elise, and I have four children. They're all different, and they all had different educational needs. One is very bright and needed a rigorous academic environment. Another is dyslexic and needed a very special school. Another is scientifically inclined, the other more artistic; they needed schools that would suit them. Fortunately, Elise and I could afford to choose the school best suited to each of our children. All parents should have that opportunity. One cannot treat all children the same way because every child is different.

The most important advantage of a competitive system is the way it responds to the consumer: the family. As things stand now, parents who are dissatisfied with a school policy are virtually powerless. When they try to act on behalf of their children against a school policy, they are regarded as a nuisance. Suppose that a child, like one of Pete du Pont's children, is scientifically inclined. Because he is not artistically inclined, he doesn't like his art class. He's carving a head of Geronimo, but it doesn't look like anything. He can't get it to look like anything and he doesn't want to. He would just like to stop doing it and continue his investigation of paramecia, blood worms, frogs, fruit flies, rock formations, and constellations. Imagine that the parents come to school to request that the child be transferred to a different class where he would be more involved. Their chance of success is slim. The principal, or more likely some deputy, will say, "That's not a valid reason." And that will be the end of it. Maybe, if they are especially courageous, the parents will persist a bit longer: "But Edward doesn't like to whittle. Neither of us likes to whittle, for that matter. No one in our whole family is much of a whittler. Why should Edward have to do it? Forcing him to do something he finds so dull, day after day, does not seem to us to be a thoughtful way of dealing with a child." That too will have little effect. The school will say, "We don't give special treatment" or, "This is not a department store."

If a school in a competitive atmosphere were to respond that way, the parents could take the child elsewhere. They would not have to accept such insensitive, peremptory treatment. Be-

Bruce Goldberg's book Why Schools Fail *will be published by the Cato Institute this fall.*

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Mr. Goodwrench Goes to School

If GM is building inferior cars, you don't wear yourself out trying to organize a consumer takeover of the company. You don't encourage GM to set up internal study committees that will draw up recommendations on how to build better cars. You don't try to have the local businesses in your neighborhood donate free services to GM so GM can more easily redesign its coupes. You don't tinker and meddle from the outside to try to convince the managers to actually accomplish what they are being paid to do.

Instead, you just buy a Japanese car. And soon, GM is doing all that reform work itself.

No more sobering, mind-concentrating, illusion-dispelling, effort-enhancing thing can happen to an organization than to have its clients and customers withdraw their support. When you exercise your consumer's judgment and take your patronage elsewhere, you not only receive a better product immediately, you also send the spurned provider a serious message that will usually cause him to institute changes that might well make you want to switch back again later. Or, if he continues to blunder, he will eventually be forced out of business, leaving his old field to new, more public-pleasing competitors.

The key to producing better schools, just like better cars, is consumer choice. Well-intentioned efforts by communities and business leaders to micro-manage local schools into shape will almost always end in frustration—exactly as the school reforms of the last decade have—unless they are accompanied by changes that give parents the right to walk away from lousy institutions and take their child's tax subsidy to another school of their choosing that is doing things right. —*KZ*

cause they would have options, the parents would be in a position to insist that Edward's character, interests, and needs be taken into account. They could decide that his being bored counted against the school. In the present system, the school counts it against Edward.

Under a scheme of competition, schools' own survival will require them to be sensitive to parental concerns, with the result that greater attention will be given to the individuality of children. The school system will begin to recognize that different children have different needs.

Defenders of the present system challenge the idea of privatizing schools on a number of grounds. The most frequent argument is that a system of competing schools, financed by the government, would violate the constitutional principle of the separation of church and state. Since some parents would use the vouchers to send their children to parochial schools, it is argued, the government would be subsidizing religion. This objection does not have much weight. In the first place, there is no more reason for saying that the government would be subsidizing religion in this case than there is for saying it is subsidizing religion when it gives a welfare check to someone who uses part of the money to make a contribution to his church. The government would be subsidizing the education of children, some of whose parents might want that education to be in a sectarian institution.

In the second place, a school voucher system has long existed without being seen as a violation of the separation of church and state. At the end of World War II, under the G.I. Bill, returning veterans were given government money to pay for their college education, and it did not matter whether the recipient chose a church-related school, as many did. Indeed, the GI Bill is the model Friedman uses to explain his voucher plan.

Some critics have also objected that a choice system might eventually result in less freedom than at present because private schools that are now relatively free of government interference would, in the new system, find themselves facing more government regulation. Since the government would be involved in funding the system, this argument runs, it would have to establish criteria for what constitutes a school, which opens the possibility that all schools would have to adopt the same practices as the public ones.

The point is well taken. Any human institution can be corrupted. And so it might happen that competition would be introduced in name only. Not only might it happen, there will be pressure for it to happen. Government regulators tend to regulate as much as possible. But people will also see the connection between the degree of governmental control and the range of their choices. So some parents will be exerting a counterpressure to governmental attempts to impose uniformity. As they come to see the value of competition, more people will demand the same variety of choices in education that they are accustomed to in other areas of their lives.

Finally, the most fundamental objection to a choice system rests on the idea of parental choice itself. The schools, it is held, should not be responsive to parents. Parents shouldn't be able to tell a school what class a child should or shouldn't be in. Parents are not in a position to decide whether the school's efforts are worthwhile. They are not experts. The education of a child is a matter for educational professionals. An English educator attacks parental choice head-on: "I'm not sure that parents know what is best educationally for their children. They know what's best for them to eat. They know the best environment they can provide at home. But we've been trained to ascertain the problems of children, to detect their weaknesses, to put right those things that need putting right, and we want to do this freely, with the cooperation of parents and not under undue strains."

The assertion that experts in educational science know how to "put things right," or how to prevent a child's having "a lopsided mind," is supposed to convince us that parents should not be making educational decisions. In this view, parents are no more in a position to question the judgment of educators than they are to question the judgment of a brain surgeon.

Schooling, then, consists in the giving of psychosocial treatment, in scientifically shaping the mind and character of a

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child. Parents are not simply sending their children to school to be taught. They are turning their children over to school to be constructed. As Horace Mann, the nineteenth-century "father" of the public school system, put it, "We who are engaged in the sacred cause of education are entitled to look upon all parents as having given hostages to our cause."

But educators' claims to scientific knowledge have no foundation. There is no such thing as educational science, as the crumbled theories of earlier "experts" like Horace Mann and countless others caution us. Those who have wanted to control the lives of others have always claimed to know exactly what others need. They have always believed that their plans represent order and public-mindedness, as opposed to the chaos that would ensue without them. When Robert Owen defended imposing his way of thinking on the members of the (failed) utopian community of New Harmony, Indiana, he claimed that the issue was "whether the character of man shall continue to be formed under the guidance of the most inconsistent notions, the errors of which for centuries past have been manifest to every reflecting rational mind; or whether it shall be moulded under the direction of uniformly consistent principles, derived from the unvarying facts of the creation."

The authors of all such views are deluded in thinking that their plans are "derived from the unvarying facts of the creation." "I have discovered what everyone needs," each one says. "My superior insight" or "my divine foresight" or "my research in the field" has "enabled me to ascertain what human beings require if they are to become rational, enlightened, civilized, autonomous." Every one of those mind-designing schemes, however, when looked at closely, has turned out to have little to do with either science or order. (The famed Horace Mann based his "science" of learning on phrenology, the now-discredited pseudo-science of bumps on the head.)

Schools have been imposing on children just the opposite of what the professional educators claim. According to the rhetoric of the public-school monopoly, today's schools follow an ordered plan, constructed by experts, based on a scientific understanding of mental development. But even the most casual look at what the school system actually offers shows there is no ordered plan at all. "The public school curriculum," as critics David and Micki Colfax put it, consists of "nothing more than a hodgepodge of materials and assumptions resulting from the historical interplay of educational theories, political expedience, education fads and fashions, pretensions to culture, demagoguery, and demography."

In truth, there is no "public school curriculum." Every state, every county, every educational committee, has its own idea of how to shape people and form their character. Every educational theorist has his or her particular notion of what constitutes indispensable human knowledge.

Even if educational theory were not riddled with ridiculous pretension, it would still be a mistake to try to impose a blueprint for mental development on everyone. To do so is to ignore the truth of Pete du Pont's observation that children all have different needs. As John Stuart Mill wrote, "There is no reason that all human existence should be constructed on some one or some small number of patterns." "Human beings," he added, "are not like sheep; and even sheep are not indistinguishably alike."

Horace Mann's central premise, writes his biographer Jonathan Messerli, was that "all children everywhere were essentially the same." Therefore, "all could be taught, once the correct techniques and goals were determined." He believed that "a system of instruction which would work for some, would work for all." In this way, today's public school system, despite its lip service to diversity, is fundamentally at war with individuality. And that is why it is failing.

A Private School with a Twist

Intern Patricia Frausto with 5th grader Rogelia Lugo

Community Preparatory School sits in a poor neighborhood of South Providence, Rhode Island. Founded in 1983 by two college roommates—principal Daniel Corley and economist Robert Hahn of the American Enterprise Institute—the independent middle school currently teaches 88 students in grades four through eight. Every graduate to date has been accepted into a college preparatory high school, with many earning scholarships to such famous schools as Miss Porter's.

Its student body is 28 percent Caucasian, and six percent of the children are hearing-impaired students who attend in connection with the school's long-running arrangement with Rhode Island School for the Deaf. All qualified students are accepted regardless of ability to pay the $6,600 tuition, and 91 percent receive half to full scholarships. Every student is required to render community service. Four times each year, parents sit down with teachers and children to set individual student goals.

One satisfied parent, writing in her local newspaper, described how Community Preparatory School "is a private school with a twist. Located in South Providence, in many ways it seems more like a public city school since they strive to include students of all backgrounds and income levels.

"Now you might wonder why a very middle-class family like us would want to send our son away from the suburbs to a city school. There are a variety of reasons, but one of the most important to us was the fact that this school is truly multicultural, multi-ethnic.... One of the primary missions of the school is to foster independent learners and individual responsibility, and you can see that in the words the children recite as a pledge each morning: 'I promise I shall use this day to the fullest.'"

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The Politics of

School Reform

By Denis P. Doyle

Illustration by Ralph Butler

School reform ought to be a hot political issue: 67 percent of Americans rate better schools as a higher priority for the next President than crime or the economy, according to a recent *USA Today* poll. Yet the topic will only elicit yawns if Clinton and Dole simply repeat their parties' past mantras.

The Democrats are now so beholden to the teachers' unions that they cannot put forward any scheme that might actually endanger the (appalling) status quo. But they do have a traditional approach that serves them well, and Clinton has mastered it: Just pronounce more high-sounding rhetoric and promise more money, and both the unions and the public will be mollified.

Republicans, on the other hand, have yet to learn that their old refrains of "cut spending" and "improve efficiency" are hopeless losers. Only if Dole seizes the initiative and proposes something different can he take the high ground on education and win votes.

That won't be easy, for Clinton has even mastered those parts of the old Republican message that do work with voters: "end the era of big government," no more intrusive federal role in education, let the states do it, insist that kids be responsible, have school uniforms, and get rid of incompetent teachers. That's what he told the governors at their recent summit and they loved it.

Unfortunately, Dole has inherited a traditional Republican message of "cut, squeeze, and trim" that is politically damaging. It costs votes. The public is convinced that education is in trouble, but it doesn't think cost-cutting is the solution. Americans want better, not less, education. Conservatives simply have not made a convinc-

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ing case for spending less, and they're not likely to make it over the next six months.

The growth of education spending tells the tale: From 1973 to '83, real expenditures for elementary and secondary education increased by 20 percent, and from 1983 to '93, they increased by 33 percent. By 1993, per-pupil spending reached $5,700.

Educational interest groups, together with the liberal media, have convinced the American public that teachers are underpaid, schools underfunded, and students on short rations. And not only is the public not convinced that we are spending too much, the public, in poll after poll, reveals its willingness to spend even more. In an extraordinary example of prospective generosity, polls even find the public willing to pay higher taxes for education—and not just for the education of their own children.

Dole should promise a Junior G.I. Bill for the nation's poor and dispossessed. Best of all, most of the money needed is already in place.

Republicans ignore these facts at their peril. What to do? For years fiscal conservatives—largely Republicans—have argued that we must first trim funding, then improve schools. This strategy only wins votes from a few economists and accountant-types. The "efficiency and competitiveness" argument at the heart of the past decade's calls for vouchers won't wash either, even though it happens to be true. Who, after all, chooses to attend a school because it's "efficient"? Exeter doesn't sell itself that way, nor does the elite Quaker school the First Child attends.

Private schools don't tout their efficiency; they stress their high academic standards and commitment to shaping character. Their "marketing strategy" consists of demanding courses, safe halls and grounds, humane administrators, caring and smart teachers, and students who are all above average. Not even low-cost parochial schools boast about their efficiency. On the contrary, they—and their clients—wish they had more money to spend. Almost all private school administrators and parents want more resources. Sidwell Friends School, where the Clintons placed Chelsea, is exactly what most parents want for their children.

And whether the Clintons want it or not, they are also receiving one more thing most parents want in their schools: religion. Sidwell Friends is a Quaker parochial school. And while by Catholic, Lutheran, or Jewish standards a Quaker school may seem rather light on religion, make no mistake: In Quaker schools the religious presence is real. It is a central part of the school experience, even though only a handful of Chelsea's 1,000 schoolmates are themselves members of the Society of Friends.

If Republicans can't win with their traditional "cut, squeeze, and trim" or "efficiency" pitches, how can they win? Is there an issue that could simultaneously be denied the Democrats and galvanize public support? Yes. Not vouchers as they have been traditionally talked about, not charter schools, not magnet schools, but something that is already within walking distance of most Americans: *existing private schools.* There are almost 25,000 of them (compared to 85,000 public schools). As it happens, 85 percent of them are parochial, and over half are Catholic.

Catholic school enrollments, especially in the inner cities, now include many non-Catholics, but for a variety of reasons their number of students has been decreasing just as the need for high quality schools has increased. In 1960, Catholic schools enrolled 5.3 million kids out of a total school-age population of 44 million. In 1990, they enrolled 2.5 million out of a total 46 million. Despite this declining enrollment, they achieve a far better degree of racial integration than public schools.

In fact, despite all their achievements, Catholic schools are still the stumbling block on the road to choice in education. The roots of the problem lie in old-fashioned anti-Catholicism. Until the 1840s, Catholic schools were supported with public funds in most of the states of the Northeast. But as nativism became triumphant, state legislatures began to cut off funding.

Yet if anti-Catholicism fueled the end of public support for Catholic schools, perhaps the end of anti-Catholicism will fuel public support for private education of all types. And the end of anti-Catholicism as a political force may be the single most important aspect of the recent contest for the Republican nomination for President. Little-noted but sure to be long-remembered, Catholic Pat Buchanan's candidacy gained the support of Protestant fundamentalists across the nation. Although President Kennedy's election in 1960 is credited with ending anti-Catholicism in America, it only signaled the beginning of the end. Whatever one's views about Buchanan, his candidacy does mark the end of more than a century of Protestant anti-Catholicism. (Now anti-Catholicism finds its home among the cultural elites, as the old saying, "anti-Catholicism is the anti-Semitism of intellectuals," reminds us.)

Admittedly, many Americans are wary of government monies going to religious schools, but their fears would likely be assuaged if politicians educated voters on the peculiarity of this nation's anti-religious stance. Simply put, America is the only civilized country in the world that does *not* support religious elementary and secondary schools. Australia, for example, has even adopted our First Amendment into its constitution word for word, yet it also funds students (rich and poor) at religious schools.

Even in America, other areas of government beneficence are free of anti-religious bias. No one dreams, for instance, of forbidding Medicare recipients to choose care in a Jewish, Lutheran, or Catholic hospital, insisting instead that they only patronize secular government hospitals. Nor does anyone demand that Social Security recipients forego the services of a religiously oriented nursing home and live in a government institution.

Similarly, the federal government does not agonize over government aid or tax credits helping to support religious pre-schools, kindergartens, or colleges. (Is it coincidence that American elementary and secondary education is deeply troubled, while our higher education remains the envy of the world?) You might say, then, that the last unserved minority group in America are poor children whose families prefer religious education for grades 1-12.

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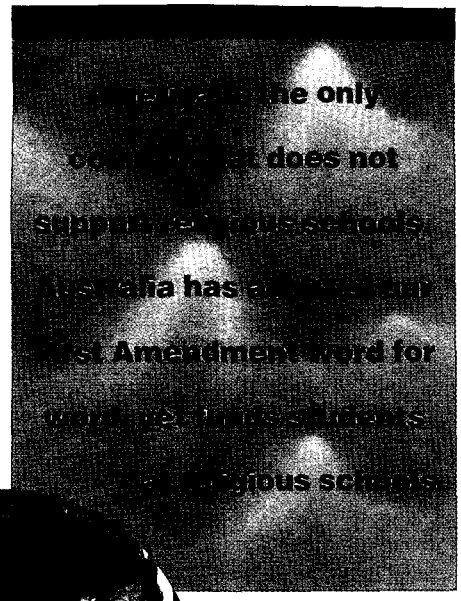
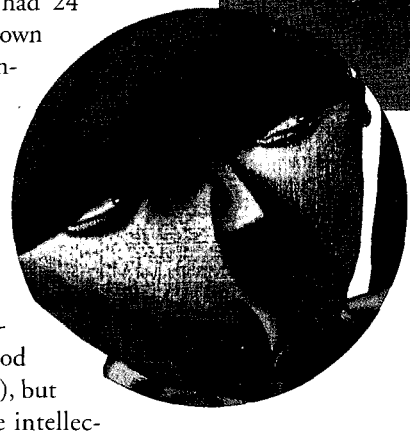


The example of government support for religious schools in other democracies should reassure those who fear that it can only lead to religious tyranny. In the Netherlands, for example, 70 percent of children attend denominational schools at public expense. Denmark, when it created a national school system, quite naturally required religious observance because the national church was Evangelical Lutheran. Being a genuinely tolerant people, however, the Danes decided that any group of parents who among them had 24 children could start their own school, largely at government expense, for any reason: "religious, political, or ideological."



The issue should be no different in this country. Parents everywhere endorse public support for private education not because it's good economics (although it is), but because it reinforces the intellectual and moral integrity of the family. *It's values, stupid!* Competition and efficiency may interest economists (and terrify the teachers' unions), but they make voters' eyes glaze over. Parents simply want good schools. And they overwhelmingly support private schools: In poll after poll, parents indicate that they would choose private over public schools *if they had the resources.*

Sure, parents want educational funds to be managed prudently, but they do not want schools to spend less just to spend less. Indeed, they do not want them to spend less at all. They want better, wiser, smarter spending, not less spending. Most parents share the folk wisdom of the jazz singer who intones, "I've been rich and I've been poor and rich is better."

They also believe that, contrary to liberal dogma, some schools are better than others, and they'd like to enroll in the good ones, thank you very much. Thoughtful parents are confident they can tell a good school from a bad one, and they don't need bureaucrats in Washington or Sacramento or Albany telling them what's good for them. Like Justice Potter Stewart, who couldn't define pornography but knew it when he saw it, parents know good schools when they see them. So, too, do teachers and students.

Indeed, as census data reveal, public school teachers in the nation's central cities are much more likely to enroll their own children in private school than the public at large. (See INDICATORS, page 18.) Hypocrisy? Perhaps, but a plausible interpretation would be connoisseurship, like the GM executive who drives a Land Rover or Mercedes.

This situation presents the Republicans with an extraordinary opportunity to seize the initiative. Dole should promise a Junior G.I. Bill for the nation's poor and dispossessed.

Best of all, most of the money needed is already in place, in the form of federal Title I education funds. In fiscal '95, Title I aid reached 6 million disadvantaged children. At nearly $7 billion a year, it is by far the biggest federal lower education program, and it has virtually no critics outside the academy. Schools love it, school districts love it, and members of Congress do too (it reaches every congressional district in the nation). Eligible children, almost all of whom are poor, are a cross section of the nation—black and white, Anglo and Hispanic, northern and southern.

While on average, federal funds account for only about 6 percent of all money spent on lower education, Title I currently makes available more than $1,000 per eligible child. That's not much compared to the amount spent per pupil in many states. But it would have a dramatic impact in most private schools, where the average elementary tuition is less than $2,000 a year. In parochial schools in particular, a thousand dollars goes a long way. (See nearby chart on public vs. private school costs.)

What about the Supreme Court? Will it tolerate a program that permits students to attend denominational schools if their parents choose? Good reasons exist to think it would. First, the Court's jurisprudence in this area has become embarrassingly chaotic. In one case it permitted government aid to go for textbooks in religious schools; in another it forbade government monies be spent on related materials

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Private Schools Are a Bargain

Tuition at the typical private school is far less than many people assume. Even choice vouchers in modest amounts would open the door to private schools for many students. And since private school tuition is usually far less than the costs per pupil at public schools, tax money could also be saved.

David Boaz and R. Morris Barrett of the Cato Institute recently surveyed public and private school costs for several representative cities:

	Per-Pupil Spending in Public Schools	Median Tuition in Private Elementary Schools	Median Tuition in Private Secondary Schools
Indianapolis	$4,700	$2,200	$1,900
San Francisco	$4,500	$2,200	$7,200*
Jersey City	$8,300	$1,800	$3,200
Atlanta	$5,800	$3,300	$5,600

*Seven private high schools in San Francisco charge less in tuition than the city's public schools spend per pupil.
Source: Cato Institute

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like maps—leading Daniel Patrick Moynihan to wonder what the Court would make of atlases.

In the 1985 *Aguilar* decision, the Court ruled that Title I funds may not directly subsidize parochial schools, but Justice Powell in his concurring opinion took pains to point out that several forms of *indirect* aid had been approved in earlier cases. Congress, he wrote encouragingly, "could fashion a program of even-handed financial assistance to both public and private schools that could be administered without governmental supervision in the private schools." If Congress adjusted Title I to fund poor children directly, rather than schools, the constitutional issue would finally be resolved in a sensible way.

How could Dole be sure such legislation would pass? On this issue he can make common cause, not just with Republicans, but with big-city Democrats. Although estimates differ as to the number of poor children currently not being served, an additional million children would cost a billion dollars. With this as a rough guideline, Dole should promise that as President he would fully fund the Title I program, with one condition: that the children be permitted to take their funds to any school that satisfies their state's compulsory attendance laws.

Full funding of Title I is already supported by groups with impeccable liberal credentials like the Committee for Economic Development and the Children's Defense Fund. They just haven't called for making it a voucher program. Dole should ask for their support as well.

President Clinton would have a hard time attacking the proposal, and Dole would gain the loyalty of hundreds of thousands of working-class blacks and white ethnics who have the most to gain from such a program. Because Clinton is in thrall to the teachers' unions, he would be unable to flank Dole. His only posture could be direct opposition, an idea that flies in the face of emerging public opinion across the nation.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, turning Title I into a voucher program makes it a federal education program consistent with conservative principles. It emphasizes that the family and the student are central and that Washington has no business selecting schools on behalf of citizens, who can do that for themselves. Lastly, it sets the stage for the 50 states to follow through on school choice, throwing wide the door for governors like Tommy Thompson, John Engler, and George Voinovich, who are already experimenting with limited voucher programs.

Today, urban public schools are about as popular as work houses in the nineteenth century, or county hospitals in the twentieth. People generally use them because they must, not because they prefer them to the alternative. After pointing out that only America denies the poor the right to attend the school of their choice, Dole should repeat the words of former New York City school official Sy Fliegel: "What's good enough for rich kids is good enough for poor kids." And when the teachers' unions howl, Dole can reply, "If private schools are good enough for your children, why aren't they good enough for poor children?"

The kindling is ready. The Republicans need only light the fire.

Unions & Pols 1, Kids 0

By Jonetta Rose Barras

Back in the 1980s, the income I eked out as a free-lance writer was hardly enough to feed my daughter, buy decent clothing, and pay bills. Sometimes assignments were plentiful: Other times I found myself in landlord-tenant court because I came up short on the rent. My greatest concern was my daughter's education.

Her father and I decided to place her in Watoto, an African-American-owned and -operated private school in the District of Columbia, because the city's public schools, then as now, were deplorable. As a single mother, I struggled mightily to meet Watoto's modest monthly tuition of $200. My daughter's father also had a hard time paying the tuition bills. (He paid the tuition for half the year; I paid the other half.) Our determination to obtain a first-rate education for our daughter forced sacrifices, but we managed to keep her at the school.

These experiences led me to embrace a proposal made earlier this year to create a federally sponsored school voucher program in the District of Columbia. And I'm not the only African American who supports educational vouchers. Nearly 48 percent of blacks surveyed by the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies say they would support a voucher system in which parents would receive government funds to send their children to the public or private school of their choice. Over half of these school choice supporters had annual incomes under $35,000.

In November 1995, Rep. Steve Gunderson (R-Wisc.) introduced a bill that set aside $5 million out of a proposed $15 million in new federal aid for the District of Columbia's schools to provide tuition vouchers. The tuition scholarship proposal was part of a larger Republican-led effort to reform the city's troubled school system. The bill also called for creating publicly funded charter schools, establishing a charter school commission, providing job training for high school seniors, reforming school curricula, and renovating school buildings.

The voucher program—the most controversial part of the package—would have given $3,000 grants to parents with incomes below the poverty line ($15,000 for a family of four) and provided $1,500 grants to families with annual incomes between $15,000 and $28,000. In addition, all families with incomes below $28,000 would have been eligible for $500 grants to pay for such after-school activities as reading enrichment and creative writing.

School vouchers did receive some local political support. City Council member William Lightfoot complained that "the school system operates a monopoly not driven by the best interest of the child but controlled by the best interest of the bureaucracy." Vouchers, he said, would "level the playing field for poor children."

Proving Lightfoot's point, local and national teachers' unions mounted a formidable lobbying effort to kill the legis-

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lation for venal reasons. For example, Frank Bolden, president of the union representing the District's public school principals, admitted he feared school employees losing their jobs.

In February the voucher bill passed the House after being endorsed by House Speaker Newt Gingrich, but the teachers' unions lobbied such powerful allies as Sen. Edward Kennedy (D-Mass.), who obliged with a filibuster that prevented the bill from being considered by the Senate. Sen. James Jeffords (R-Vt.) attempted to reach a compromise that would have installed a limited voucher program. But his efforts failed, and by April the voucher bill died a contentious death.

Some vocal middle-class African-American residents also opposed the voucher plan, claiming it would destroy the city's public schools. But this argument is ludicrous. The District has 80,000 public school students; the voucher program would have aided only 1,500—less than 2 percent of the total. In addition, many members of the middle-class opposition had already used their political and financial connections to secure places for their children in the city's few decent public schools. Thus these school choice opponents, who claimed to be preserving resources for poor and working-class parents, were actually insisting that the children of such families remain trapped in schools that most of the middle and upper class had long abandoned.

The media also misreported the situation by presenting school vouchers primarily as an assault on the separation of church and state. Most reporters, particularly those at the *Washington Post*, assumed that vouchers would only be used for parochial schools, even though the District of Columbia has a substantial number of secular private schools, including four black-owned ones.

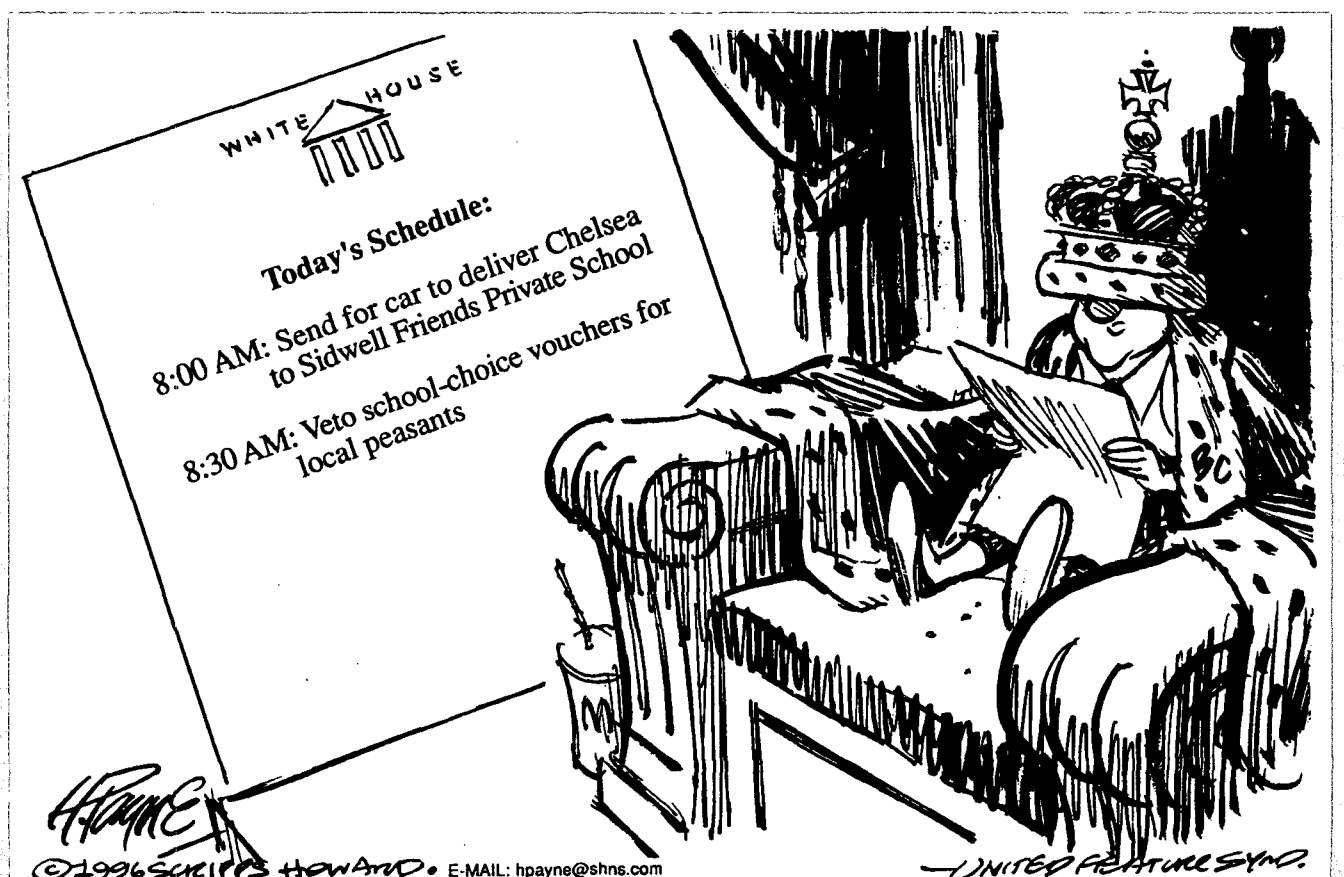
In the end, Congress acquiesced to the strong-armed lobbying tactics of unions, the misrepresentation of certain media outlets, and the territorial needs of local politicians. Lacking lobbyists, poor parents lost the chance to have their children obtain the quality education available to their wealthy counterparts. "The teachers' unions put a line in the sand so deep, there is no way with our present makeup to have any kind of scholarship," Rep. Gunderson said in an interview.

Luckily, my daughter's story ended happily. Despite my perpetually late tuition payments, the Watoto school let my daughter stay in class. By the time she reached the eleventh grade, my income made me a member of the middle class, and I used my clout to get her into a good public school. She had a wonderful two years there. But many parents, destined to remain poor or working class, will watch their children remain in deteriorating public schools until tuition vouchers are available.

Many people want to "maintain the status quo," says James Ford, staff director of the City Council's Committee on Education. "Why can't the kids come first, just once?"

Good question.

Jonetta Rose Barras is associate editor of the Washington City Paper *and a columnist for the* Washington Times.



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Teachers' Unions

Roadblocks to Reform

by Charlene K. Haar

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You cannot understand the plight of America's public schools without understanding the force that exercises the most power over them. No, it's not the PTA. The strongest players in the schoolhouse game are the two teachers' unions, the National Education Association (NEA) and the American Federation of Teachers (AFT). Together they enroll about three-fourths of all K-12 public school teachers in the United States. That's a lot of people power. I estimate NEA and AFT revenues to be about $1.3 billion annually, not counting their PACs, foundations, and special purpose organizations. That's a lot of cash to buy influence and create favorable images, and nobody does it better than they do. Mix these ingredients with more than 5,000 well-paid staff (more than half making over $100,000 annually in salary plus benefits), and you have a huge, powerful political machine with enormous influence over educational decisionmakers from the school house to the White House.

On educational, legislative, and political issues, there are no significant differences between the two unions. They are both closely aligned with the Democratic Party. Their staffs have been working in the Clinton/Gore re-election campaign since 1995; former staff members hold high-level positions in the Clinton administration, and the NEA's former head lobbyist is running this year's Democratic National Convention.

The NEA and AFT do differ in membership, resources, structure, and leadership. AFT's membership is more concentrated in large urban centers; the NEA is much stronger in suburban and rural areas. Although these demographic differences sometimes result in policy differences, the two unions share basic objectives. In the 1960s and '70s, when the NEA and AFT competed over who would represent teachers, their rhetoric exaggerated their differences. Since then, the NEA and AFT have made a "no-raid" agreement and now are talking merger.

In 1959 the Wisconsin legislature passed the first law granting teachers' unions the authority to bargain "collectively" to determine terms and conditions of employment. By 1996, 34 states had followed suit. Even where no such law exists, mostly in right-to-work states, the NEA and AFT enroll hundreds of thousands of members and receive hundreds of millions of dollars in dues. In many states they generate huge revenues from subsidiary organizations they control—insurance operations, data processing centers, retirement homes, credit unions, educational foundations, credit card operations, and real estate holdings.

The unions' power rests on two state-imposed privileges: a bargaining monopoly and the collection of service fees from nonmember teachers in most states with collective bargaining laws. In those states, all public school teachers are compelled to accept an NEA or AFT affiliate as their representative when a majority says so. In most of these states, nonmembers must pay the NEA and AFT for services they don't want, either by state law or by the con-

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tractual agreement between the union and the schoolboard.

Political operatives known as "UniServ directors" act as negotiators for NEA's local affiliates, financed by the national organization, the state affiliates, and sometimes the locals. UniServ directors serve as chief negotiators or consult with local affiliates in negotiations, contract administration, grievance matters, organizing, and political activities. In the AFT, local elected officers are expected to negotiate affiliate contracts. National representatives assist when necessary. NEA and AFT staff members thus legally are the "voice" for public school teachers and for many support personnel. And parents, teachers, taxpayers, and school boards have steadily lost effective control over school management.

School boards ostensibly formulate educational policy. But the terms and conditions of teacher employment are negotiated with the union—and those terms cannot be separated from educational policy. Suppose a school board wants to assign its most experienced teachers to inner-city schools. Is that educational policy? Not to the union. It will treat the proposal as a transfer policy subject to bargaining. With over 70 percent of the nation's 2.9 million public school teachers working under collective bargaining agreements, their unions obviously play a key role in making and carrying out educational policies.

Because NEA and AFT dues and fees rise in proportion to members' salaries, their operatives vigorously pursue salary increases, regardless of any other considerations. When negotiations break down, teachers' unions seldom hesitate to interrupt the education of youngsters to achieve their objective. As education authority Myron Lieberman—who once ran for president of the AFT—puts it, "When the Teamsters or auto workers strike, no one doubts that they do so for their benefit; when teachers strike, it is always 'for the children' or 'for education.'"

Combined local, state, and national dues for NEA and AFT members range from $300 to $700 annually. Most school boards deduct dues from teachers' pay and forward the money to the union automatically and free of charge. The NEA and AFT local affiliates keep their share, then divide the rest between their state affiliates and the national headquarters. According to their publications, the national headquarters take in over a quarter of a billion dollars in dues, more than $1 million every working day. But that hefty sum is less than a fifth of the monies going to the state and local affiliates.

What's good for teachers' unions is not necessarily good for children and parents. Many NEA and AFT contracts include provisions that harm students. For example:

- restrictive procedures for evaluating teachers make it difficult to fire incompetent ones
- adverse material in teacher files must be removed, usually after two years, making it difficult to identify teachers who are incompetent or who have undesirable backgrounds
- as a condition of employment, all teachers must join the union or pay agency shop fees; non-compliance requires dismissal
- only persons with education certificates may be hired by the school board; good people with military, business, or professional backgrounds are not permitted to teach
- leave time is excessive, creating discontinuities in an already-limited school year
- teachers receive allowances or tuition reimbursement for taking courses that are irrelevant to their assignments but that permit the teacher to advance on the salary schedule
- salary schedules pay all teachers the same, regardless of grade level, subject, or competency
- assignments are made by seniority, rather than by district needs
- layoffs are based on last-in-first-out rules, regardless of individual merit
- promotions must be filled by appointments from within the bargaining unit, to the exclusion of better-qualified outsiders.

The teachers' unions also discourage volunteer services if unions are seeking compensation for the same work. Some teachers volunteer anyway, but the dynamics of collective bargaining make it less common than it would be.

Even the occasional union proposal that appears to foster achievement often does the opposite. For instance, the unions invariably propose reductions in class size. The question, though, is not whether reducing class size improves student achievement, but whether the money spent to do it (by hiring more teachers) could be used more effectively some other way, such as to purchase better instructional materials. In a national poll last year, parents rated class size as far less important than the quality of teachers.

The unions' obstructionist policies have led critics to assign unions much of the blame for students' poor performance. As one prominent advocate of school choice, Wisconsin state assemblywoman Polly Williams, has repeatedly asked, "What are the public schools accountable for? What good is all this talk of accountability if a child goes there for 12 years and then comes out unable to read and write?"

Others are asking similar questions. At a press conference during the NEA's 1996 convention, the Education Policy Institute and several other organizations called on NEA delegates and the media to scrutinize the union. "Investigate the tremendous gap between NEA rhetoric and the reality of what the NEA and its state and local affiliates are doing," the group implored. NEA's press release shot back: "The NEA has a proud history of advocating for legislation that benefits children and schools."

True, the NEA certainly does advocate more legislation (read: more federal and state funding) as the solution for the problems of public education. John Berthoud of the Alexis de Tocqueville Institution reviewed the NEA's legislative program for Congress and found that, if enacted, it would increase federal spending by at least $702 billion a year. But Berthoud disagreed that the program would benefit children: "For each dollar in new spending on children and education that the NEA proposes (over $24 billion annu-

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ally), it advocates $5.24 in new spending on Social Security." Increasing the welfare state, not improving children's education, is uppermost on this agenda.

Of late, the image-conscious NEA has been de-emphasizing the union sound of its rhetoric—while tightening its grip on American education. NEA publications now emphasize "restructuring," "partnerships," and "collective initiatives" instead of "collective bargaining." Yet a top NEA priority is to pass collective bargaining laws in states that do not yet have them.

The new rhetoric seems to embrace reform, but parents and taxpayers should beware. With great fanfare, for example, the NEA announced its intention to operate five charter schools. Yet any NEA charter schools will still be public schools, constrained by union prerogatives that will leave them unresponsive to parents and students.

Despite their rhetoric, the NEA and AFT routinely sabotage efforts for meaningful reform. In particular, the unions have mounted formidable opposition to school vouchers, privatization, and similar market-oriented reforms within the public system. Both publish step-by-step manuals on how to sabotage school board efforts to contract out for services. Details from orchestrating press coverage to filing law suits are included. While they oppose school board efforts to do so, the AFT, the NEA, and affiliates with unabashed hypocrisy contract out for services themselves. The unions say "efficiency," "competition," "productivity," and "accountability" would hurt children. Nonsense. The NEA and AFT are merely protecting themselves at the expense of children.

Nowhere is the unions' clout more evident and more self-serving than in politics. Every year, the NEA and AFT invest millions to elect friendly politicians. The NEA's UniServ directors are part of a cadre of union political operatives. More than 1,500 such directors organize political activities in every congressional district in the nation. School boards, judges, county officials, state legislators, and of course congressional candidates and presidents are elected with support from the NEA, which actually employs more full-time, paid political operatives than the Democratic and Republican parties combined. The AFT has counterparts who perform similar jobs. Both unions recruit candidates, help organize campaigns, sponsor fundraisers, pay for consultants, prepare and pay for advertisements, coordinate voter registration, sponsor rallies, coordinate "volunteer" activities, and get favorable voters to the polls.

Cash contributions to candidates—as opposed to "voluntary assistance"—come from the NEA and AFT political action committees. The NEA established its PAC in 1972 and since then has endorsed every Democratic candidate for President. The AFT's Committee on Political Education (AFT/COPE) overwhelmingly endorses Democratic candidates. The NEA trumpets its "bipartisanship," yet by mid-June 1996, NEA-PAC had endorsed 185 congressional candidates—all Democrats. Together, NEA-PAC and AFT/COPE are an $8 million operation. In addition, a network of NEA and AFT state and local affiliate PACs pour millions more into school board, local, county, judicial, and state legislative races.

The NEA actually employs more full-time, paid political operatives than the Democratic and Republican parties combined.

Members are responding to the call to arms: At its 1996 convention, NEA delegates contributed over $724,000 to NEA-PAC during the five-day meeting.

The unionization of teachers and the political power of the NEA and AFT mark a basic change in the character of the American labor movement. In 1953, public employees constituted only 6 percent of union membership; now they will soon be the majority. These days, about four of every ten public sector union members are enrolled by the NEA or AFT. "Public-sector unionism's durability and ascending growth curve are the result of its virtual immunity from competition and government policy, which enhances its monopoly power," says union-watcher Leo Troy.

That immunity could change after the 1996 elections. State lawmakers have begun to respond to parent and taxpayer concerns over NEA and AFT domination of education. Legislation to eliminate agency fees and union PAC deductions, to restrict mandatory subjects of bargaining, and to create school choice options has been proposed and in some cases enacted. Both the NEA and AFT acknowledge they are fighting to hold on to power. If the 1996 elections are similar to 1994, expect more legislation to reduce teachers' unions' revenues and weaken that power.

With the majority of teachers now unionized, expanding the NEA and AFT membership is a constant challenge. Rapid growth in the last 30 years has brought the NEA to 2.2 million members, the AFT to 872,000. Most NEA and AFT members are teachers. Now the race is on to organize bus drivers, cafeteria workers, and other school employees. Independent unions, as well as a dozen or more AFL-CIO unions, are competing with the NEA and AFT to gain the support of these employees.

Meanwhile, tight budgets are forcing school boards to consider contracting out many of these jobs. When janitors, bus drivers, school secretaries, lunchroom workers, and school nurses unite with teachers under the same banner to resist that option, conflicts are inevitable. Although the NEA and AFT are opposing any such privatization efforts with all their might, school administrators and boards will increasingly insist on their right to determine how services are provided, including the right to use the private sector.

The most important question is not whether the provider of a service is "public" or "private," but whether the service is available under competitive or monopolistic conditions. Private companies are generally more responsive than public employees because they have a powerful incentive to perform: If they don't, they will lose out to their competitors.

AFT president Shanker has said, "If you take certain things like vouchers and replacement of public school teachers by private companies—if these are 'reforms,' yes, unions stand in the way." It is safe to say the NEA and AFT will not get out of the way until they are forced to do so.

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BUS RIDE TO NO-WHERE

AFTER THE FAILURE OF BUSING, MILWAUKEE PARENTS TURN TO SCHOOL CHOICE

BY DANIEL McGROARTY

Milwaukee: For all the debate over school choice, it remains the one U.S. city where vouchers have progressed from rhetoric to reality. An experimental system of publicly and privately funded vouchers now allows a significant number of Milwaukee parents to choose among public, private, religious, and various alternative schools for their children's education.

One big reason Milwaukee supports school choice: Busing—the previous "solution" to the city's school problems—has proved a disaster. Ask an African-American parent why she supports choice and you'll find it isn't because she's read, say, free-market economist Milton Friedman. Rather, the roots of Milwaukee's first-in-the-nation private school choice program lie in the passion play of Martin Luther King, Jr., and stories of the Little Rock Nine. To understand the appeal of private school choice to inner-city blacks, you must first understand how their hopes were raised and then dashed by racial busing, in whose wake many neighborhood schools were casually destroyed.

"They sold us desegregation as a panacea, a placebo," says Mikel Holt, African-American editor of the *Milwaukee Community Journal*. "It was supposed to be our ed-

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ucational Emancipation Proclamation, leading us out to educational equality." But "for 15 years," he shakes his head, "we've been on a bus ride to nowhere."

Holt speaks from authority. In 1964, he was a student at North Division High School when parents and activists began chaining themselves to school buses to protest Milwaukee's system of "separate but equal" schools. North Division was filled to overflowing in the 1960s. Classes were held in the cafeteria, in the auditorium, and in storage closets. The school, built in 1907, was in a state of rampant disrepair. Cracked windows were patched with duct tape, broken bulbs protruded from light sockets. In the early morning, as students arrived, rats sometimes skittered across dark hallways.

Textbooks at North Division had not been replaced for more than a decade. Holt recalls the standing joke from those days. "Ask a student how many states there were," smiles Holt. "If he told you '48,' then he was from North."

In 1964, the Milwaukee public schools practiced "intact busing," in which entire classrooms of black children and their black teachers were bused to white schools. Once there, they entered self-contained classrooms and took recess only after the white children had left the playground. Often, these children were bused back to their original school for lunch, instead of eating in the white school's cafeteria. Then they returned by bus for the afternoon recess, never once coming in contact with white children.

In February 1964, the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) and the NAACP began organizing pickets against intact busing. One month later, the Milwaukeeans United for School Integration Committee (MUSIC) formed as an umbrella organization. In spring 1964, 71 MUSIC activists were arrested for blocking buses, and as many as 16,000 public school students chose to attend "freedom schools" held in churches and taught by Marquette University student activists.

Black and white activists then began a 15-year fight against the school system. In 1976, they achieved their first victory when the Milwaukee public schools adopted a "specialty" schools program known as "Chapter 220," a magnet scheme whose specialized academic tracks were supposed to attract voluntary student transfers. While Chapter 220 appeared to be race-neutral, African-American students were bused far more often than whites. When schools were designated "specialty," seats were reserved for white students voluntarily enrolling; displaced black students were bused elsewhere.

In 1979, as white enrollment in the Milwaukee public schools fell below 50 percent for the first time, the activists fighting the Milwaukee school system triumphed in the courts. The public schools and the NAACP agreed on a consent decree to desegregate. Milwaukee became one of a very few areas in the country where busing broke the barrier between the minority-dominated central city and predominantly white suburbs.

The effect on neighborhoods was the educational equivalent of a neutron bomb. Neighborhood schools in many cases remained standing, but neighborhood children disappeared, dispersed across the city. Buses began boarding as early as 5:30 A.M., only to return by 6:00 P.M. In some cases, predominantly black elementary schools were closed outright, their students bused to outlying, majority-white schools to provide the requisite racial balance.

By 1988, 19 neighborhoods saw 60 percent of their students bused to an average of 86 different elementary schools. For

Daniel McGroarty is the Lynde and Harry Bradley Fellow at the Institute for Contemporary Studies. This article is adapted from Break These Chains: The Battle for School Choice *(Prima Publishing, 1996).*

BLACKS VS. BUSING

"School busing may have outlived its usefulness to achieve academic parity." These blunt words were spoken last October by then-president of the Yonkers NAACP, Kenneth Jenkins. Though anathema to the NAACP's leadership, a number of local black leaders have begun to express similar doubts about busing's value.

Robert Robinson, president of the Bergen County, New Jersey NAACP, voiced his opposition to busing a month later. "We want the highest-quality education for black children, and integration of schools hasn't provided that. *Brown* v. *Board of Education* has been in effect for 41 years. What have we really gained?" he asked.

Nor are these two men lone dissenters. Genevieve Mitchell, who heads Cleveland's Black Women's Center, likewise sees a stark difference between school vouchers, which her organization supports, and the city's compulsory busing scheme, which she calls "the most heinous and politically invasive process ever initiated to undermine quality education for all." Rep. Martin Hoke of Cleveland's Tenth District concurs. "When kids attend schools miles away from their homes," he asks, "what working parent is able to attend sporting events, parent-teacher conferences, and home-room parties?"

Yet the civil rights establishment has little tolerance for such heterodoxy. Yonkers' Jenkins was summarily suspended for his remarks, with NAACP higher-up Hazel Dukes telling the *Wall Street Journal,* "If Mr. Jenkins wants to be an independent thinker, then he ought not be president of the branch." Insisting he has no regrets, Jenkins says he was only "taking a conversation that has been going on in people's homes and bringing it out."

—John Drake

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instance, in the Clark Elementary School attendance area—96 percent black—fewer than 500 children attended school in the neighborhood, while over 1,600 others were bused to 104 different schools in all corners of the city. In the Seifert Elementary attendance area, for instance, 500 neighborhood children went to Seifert, another 800 were bused to 91 different schools.

Milwaukee's busing has evolved into a multimillion-dollar business. The city buses two-thirds of its public school students—more than 65,000 children—at an annual cost of $45 million. The finance formulas involved create incentives for school systems to keep the buses filled. As Mikel Holt sees it, "busing money is like cocaine. School systems got hooked."

The economics of busing bear Holt out. Transfers inside a district are encouraged by a funding formula that gives the system 1.2 times the usual per-pupil funding whenever a student transfers from a school that is more than 30 percent minority to one whose minority enrollment is 30 percent or less. In this way, each student yields a 20 percent "busing bonus" for the school system. For transfers between districts, the incentive is even higher. The receiving district takes in 100 percent of the standard per-pupil funding to cover the incoming child, and the sending district is "held harmless," receiving its full allotment for the student's empty seat. In addition, receiving schools not only earn a 20 percent bonus when the incoming transfers exceed five percent of their resident enrollment, they also receive funds to pay for the busing. At a time when declining white birthrates make it difficult for some suburban schools to fill classrooms, Chapter 220 has become a significant source of both students and funding.

Few suburban whites use Chapter 220 to send their children to Milwaukee schools. The first year, 330 minority children were bused to suburban schools, while only 11 suburban children came to Milwaukee. By the 1986-87 school year, the numbers were roughly 3,000 city students to 800 suburban ones. By 1990, 5,000 blacks were being bused to 40 schools in 23 Milwaukee suburbs; only 1,300 white suburban children traveled to the city, mostly to magnet programs that refused black students places in order to reserve seats for whites.

Cynics suspect Chapter 220 is also a way to siphon away central-city athletes who then compete for suburban schools. Mikel Holt tells a story about a tall and talented African-American high school student ferried each day to and from his suburban school not by a school bus, but a taxicab. Taxpayers, apparently, picked up the fare.

Busing has hardly affected the racial make-up of Milwaukee schools at all. In 1975, North Division High School was 99 percent black. Fifteen years after the consent decree, North Division is 98 percent black. In the 1995-96 school year, Milwaukee public schools as a whole were roughly 80 percent minority.

Nor is there any evidence that busing in Milwaukee has advanced African-American student achievement. In the Milwaukee public schools today, only one out of five black students exceeds national test averages; black students fail more than a quarter of their classes. At North Division, 30 percent of the students are absent on any given day, and the average grade is a *D-*. Black students still do less well in the Milwaukee schools than their white counterparts, and whenever the gap between black and white student achievement has narrowed, it has been due not to black improvement, but to dwindling white scores.

Moreover, by breaking down neighborhood bonds, busing may have increased the opportunities for youth to turn bad. Polly Williams, the maverick Democratic state assemblywoman instrumental in establishing Milwaukee's school choice program, argues that long bus rides provide a golden opportunity for gangs to recruit new members. "Children that young," she observes, "sent off to neighborhoods they don't know, full of people who don't want them there—those children are ripe for the picking for any gang banger who promises to protect them."

The Pittsburgh Board of Education is budgeted to spend $25 million this year on school busing, a program that any real estate agent can tell you has caused Pittsburgh parents to flee the city in droves. After nearly two decades of court-ordered busing, most Pittsburghers say that the students—rich, poor, black or white—would be better served if the busing dollars were spent on tutors, books, computers, merit raises for superior teachers, or athletic programs. But the feeling that "you can't fight City Hall" prevails, causing those who cannot afford to flee the city to resign themselves to the relentless intrusion of an outmoded government program in the lives of their children.

"Up until last summer, I wouldn't even let 13-year-old Scott walk the three blocks to the grocery store by himself with the way the world is today," says Melissa, a hard-working, religious woman who is devoted to her family. "Now a court order is mandating that he be bused across town from Brookline to Schenley High School, about 12 miles. He's supposed to take two buses, one to a downtown stop where there have been shootings."

"Scott went to Carmalt School for kindergarten through fifth grade," Melissa continues. "The school's a mile from our house, and I drove Scott both ways every day. We'd get up at 8:30, have breakfast at home, and be at school by 9:00. I'd pick him up at 3:15 and we'd be home by 3:20." At Carmalt, Scott played hockey and basketball. "There's no time for his sports now," Melissa says. "With the bus ride he'd get home after 5:00, and on Tuesday, Thursday, and Sunday we go to Bible class. He won't have time to study."

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Williams herself became a political activist partly to protect her children from busing. A single mother who raised four children, Williams struggled to put her children through a nearby private school. But its classes ended in eighth grade, forcing Williams's children into the public schools. At one point Williams wanted her daughter to attend Riverside High, but the school system planned to bus her daughter to a school Williams thought inferior. She appealed the decision, and her appeal was denied. Williams then strode down the hall to the superintendent's office. She found the office empty. Spotting a legal pad on the desk, she wrote, "My name is Polly Williams. I live at 1437 Burleigh Street. I will not send my child to the school you've assigned. You may come and arrest me."

"Then," Williams recalls, holding her wrists together as if ready for handcuffs, "I went home to wait." Three hours passed, and the phone rang. Williams's daughter sat watching at the kitchen table as her mother answered. The conversation was short and, uncharacteristically, Williams did most of the listening. Hanging up, she turned to her daughter. "It was the superintendent's office. You start at Riverside on Monday."

Wisconsin's landmark private school voucher law has its origins in Williams's own experience. She has institutionalized the right she won for herself a dozen years before. "I came up with choice outside of the public school system," she told the *New York Times*, "because I couldn't get choice within it."

Busing in Milwaukee became slightly less onerous in 1991, when Superintendent Howard Fuller divided the city into five zones and allowed elementary school parents to choose the zone to which their children could be bused. The policy, still in force, ensures that preteen children from the same neighborhood school "attendance area" will be bused to "only" 25 or 30 other schools, instead of 100. Secondary school students are still bused anywhere in the city.

For African-American parents seeking to keep their children close to home, busing has meant the end of the neighborhood public school. In Milwaukee, Polly Williams observes, busing ensured that "the only neighborhood schools that were left were private schools."

BUSING FAILS IN PITTSBURGH

Weighing her options, Melissa considers everything from moving out of the city, to home schooling, to lying about her address. She wants to leave the city for nearby suburbs, but can't afford it. Her husband is a truck driver, and she's a convenience store clerk three nights a week. "I thought about using my sister-in-law's address outside the city like my neighbor does, but I'm too honest. I'd do home-schooling if I was educated enough. Five of my girlfriends do."

"It was in sixth grade," she says, "that 10-year-old Scott began being bused from Carmalt to Northside and lost three hours out of his day and began to live in fear for his life." Within three weeks Scott witnessed his first gunshots. The following week Melissa and Scott had their first argument about gang colors: "I'd ironed a red outfit for him the night before, matching sweat pants and a sweater. 'I can't wear that; it's gang colors,' Scott said. 'Do you want me to be killed?' I ironed him a plaid shirt." Melissa adds that "this has nothing to do with race. Our Bible study group is one of the most integrated in Pittsburgh. It's about weapons and the feeling that I'm losing control over my son's safety."

Many Pittsburghers who can afford it have left the city, while others enroll their children in private schools. Large numbers of students scheduled for busing to the middle schools have enrolled in private schools. Last year the Pittsburgh school district lost 439 students, on top of 278 the year before.

By paying tutors $10 an hour, the estimated $10 million of this year's busing budget allocated to racial balancing would pay for a million hours of individualized instruction to students, while also providing supplementary income to student tutors or teachers. "Wouldn't tutoring increase a disadvantaged student's chances for success more than two hours on a bus each day?" asks Melissa's husband.

On July 12, bowing to angry parents, Governor Tom Ridge signed Act 117, known as the Neighborhood Schools Bill. It prohibits the Human Relations Commission from assigning any student to a school other than the one nearest to the student's home, and also prohibits assigning children to schools on the basis of race, religion, color, sex, ancestry, or national origin.

But a spokesman for the Pittsburgh Board of Education says the act "may have no effect in Pittsburgh." The act is not retroactive, she explains, and the Board is still under a court order to "maintain diversity. Nothing in the act prevents a school district from voluntarily continuing an integration plan." Fearful that the School Board may not take action in accord with Act 117 Michael Romanello, editor of the *Pittsburgh Observer,* is calling for a tax strike "to force the issue."

Meanwhile, the buses keep rolling and families like Melissa's are still getting steamrolled. "It seems like the middle class can't get ahead any more," says Melissa. "Everything's for the rich or the poor. If I had the money, I'd be gone out of this city."

"If we stop busing, I think we can save the city," says Pittsburgh City Councilman Dan Onorato. "If we do nothing and keep the same situation, in the next 20 years the city will be in financial ruin."

—Ralph Reiland teaches at Robert Morris College in Pittsburgh.

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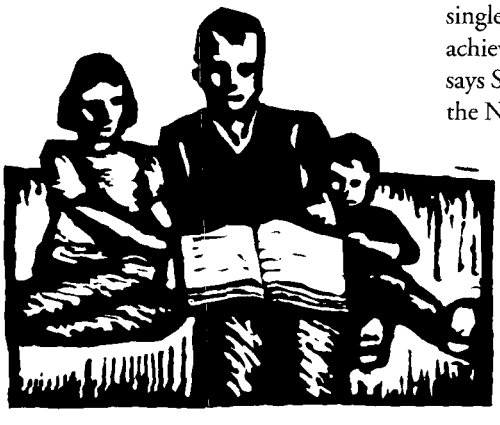
family meltdown in the classroom

by Karl Zinsmeister

American children come to school better prepared to learn than in times past—in most ways. The percentage of high school students with a mother who didn't graduate from high school herself has fallen from over 80 in 1940 to 20 today. The number of students from large, crowded families (a condition that correlates with lower academic achievement) has tumbled. And average kids are much better nourished, healthier, and materially better off than in earlier years.

But even as these traditional stumbling blocks to school success were disappearing, one other risk factor was taking off, and it wiped out the multiple gains that should have left 1990s students in much better shape than their predecessors. This big new negative was the rise of the single-parent household. Because of the breakdown of marriage, typical American children today receive less care and oversight from their parents. As a result, the raw material flowing into our classrooms is much rawer than it once was.

"The family revolution is the greatest single cause of the decline in student achievement during the last 20 years," says Samuel Sava, executive director of the National Association of Elementary School Principals. "It's not better teachers, texts, or curricula that our children need most," he says. "It's better childhoods."



When he was director of the NAACP, Benjamin Hooks made the same case with particular reference to minority students:

> We can talk all we want about school integration; we can file suits to have more black role models in the classrooms and in administrative positions.... But if the child returns home to a family devoid of the basic tenets necessary for his discipline, growth, and development, the integrated school environment must fail.

As far back as the late 1960s, University of Chicago sociologist James Coleman published groundbreaking studies demonstrating the importance of family patterns to school achievement. In the early 1970s, sociologist Christopher Jencks and some colleagues wrote a watershed book demonstrating that family stability and home conditions are far more important to academic success than the way a school is structured. In the early 1980s, Professor Harold Stevenson found that American schoolchildren lagged behind their Asian counterparts intellectually from as early as the first grade—when only a weaker home environment, and not schools, could be blamed.

Early 1990s research papers on Indochinese "boat people" who had arrived in the U.S. after years of physical and emotional trauma, possessing very little English, education, or money, "point overwhelmingly to the pivotal role of the family in children's academic success." The children studied had been in this country on average less than four years and were all attending relatively weak schools in low-income urban areas. Nonetheless, these youngsters excelled academically—not just a few whiz kids, but the vast majority. And the reason,

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investigators found, was the strong support and high demands they got from their durable, close-knit families.

Anyone who walks into a schoolroom today will see ample evidence of the problems that result when parents stop making their young a priority in their lives. "Children over the last few years are coming to school without a conscience—that voice that tells them what's right or wrong. They're simply not getting the direction at home," reports Florida educator Mary Bryant.

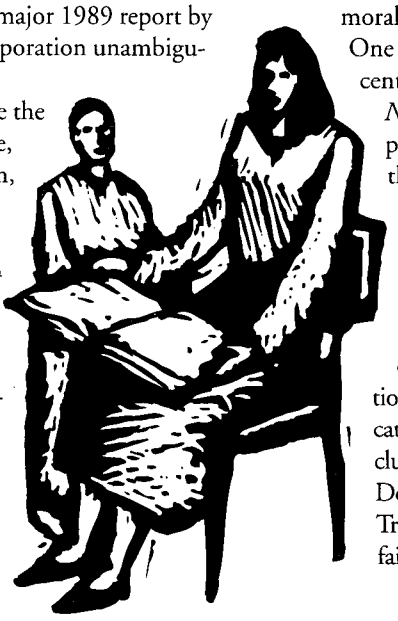
It isn't only the children from troubled families who suffer. "Put enough children from broken families in a classroom, and the entire classroom culture changes. There is more conflict, more chaos, more emphasis on therapy, mediation skills, self-esteem, less time for plain old learning," comments analyst Barbara Dafoe Whitehead. "At some point, it doesn't matter whether your child is from a stable family or not, since the culture is built around the turmoil and distress of children from messed-up families."

In today's worst cases, we are witnessing the out-and-out collapse of childhood. One Illinois teacher, questioned about the family background of her students, responded, "currently, seven of my students' parents...are getting divorces. One stepfather raped his stepdaughter...one boy killed himself...one girl ran away to Florida for two months and now has a child." Recognizing how family dissolution can affect school performance, fully 70 percent of all U.S. elementary school principals now keep formal records of each student's family structure.

Describing conditions in the quiet Massachusetts college town where her own family lives, Barbara Whitehead writes,

> When my son was in the fourth grade, I volunteered to accompany his class on a week-long stay at a nature camp. I served as the chaperone for the girls and stayed in their dorm. The majority of these children were from single-parent, blended, or "complicated" families. I expected homesickness, physical sickness, fright from too-scary ghost stories, and some rivalries and cliquishness.
>
> I was completely unprepared for what I found: sexually savvy and sexually explicit gossip and stories; slapping fights and verbal abuse among the girls; and, perhaps saddest of all, deep emotional cravings—expressed in hugging, kissing, and crawling on the lap of their woman teacher. These were nine-and ten-year-old girls.

The education establishment's main reaction to the school problems wrought by family collapse has been to try to turn schools into parent-substitutes and all-purpose welfare agencies. George Bush's Education Secretary (later presidential candidate) Lamar Alexander urged that "the brand new American school should be year-round, open from six to six, serving children from the age of three months." William Lepley, director of the trend-setting Iowa Department of Education, suggests the ideal school should offer services such as health care, childcare, childbirth and parenting classes, and job matching. Florida Governor Lawton Chiles says, "I look forward to a time when we keep schools open to 10 o'clock every night, have them going 12 months a year, make them a place where poor families can pick up Food Stamps and their food from the Women, Infants and Children program and their AFDC checks." A major 1989 report by the Carnegie Corporation unambiguously called for schools to provide the personal guidance, ethical instruction, and sexual information that has traditionally been left to parents.



One drawback of this strategy is that it overloads teachers. The authors of 1983's *A Nation at Risk* report were shocked to learn that 25 percent of the credits earned by American general track students in the early 1980s were in "health-education" classes, "personal-adjustment" courses (like "Training for Adulthood"), non-academic work-study projects, gym, and various remedial classes. I recently screened a classroom video that is distributed by the National Geographic Society for use by teachers in today's popular "life skills" classes. The film's subject was "personal grooming." It was 30 minutes long and came complete with a classroom study guide and follow-up questions. And its entire thrust could be reduced to one sentence: "Washing your hands and face and brushing your teeth is a good idea."

"Name *one* subject that's been *dropped* from elementary schools in the 1980s," challenged a recent principals' newsletter. "Now, think about the subjects that have been *added*: AIDS, sex- and drug-abuse education, hygiene, family-life training, nutrition and fitness, environmental education, conflict resolution." As the president of the Chicago Principals' Association asks, "Who's against bike safety? But how much time should we spend on something like that?"

The trend in public education has been to convert schools into full-service social-service agencies, where children get their meals, their doctoring, their social and racial integration, their after-hours babysitting, their driving instruction, their indoctrination in multicultural thinking, their drug treatment, their moral training, and their condoms. One Northlake, Illinois teacher recently described her job to *Newsweek* this way: "You're the parent, the nurse, the policeman, the social worker and, very last, you are the teacher."

Yet school-based social work has not been especially effective. "The federal, state and local governments have poured millions of dollars into compensatory education, dropout prevention, drug education, and other schemes," conclude school reform experts Denis Doyle, Bruce Cooper, and Roberta Trachtman, "most of which have failed." Such programs, they report,

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"have often become employment devices for specialists, but few of the resources reached the students and their families."

A major research finding of the last decade is that successful schools share one critical characteristic: "the belief that academics must invariably receive priority over every other activity" (to quote Professor Daniel Singal). Unfortunately, this is not where most American teachers currently put their emphasis. When University of Michigan researcher Harold Stevenson asked American instructors the most important attribute of good teaching, the consensus answer was "sensitivity." (When he asked Asian teachers the same thing, the majority mentioned "clarity" in presenting materials.) "Perhaps," comments high school teacher Patrick Welsh, "we American teachers need to be reminded that we're not therapists."

f the school is feeding a child breakfast and lunch, organizing his vaccinations, scheduling his before- and after-school time, teaching him how to make decisions and get along with others, and counseling him in everything from sexual behavior to job ambitions, it becomes easier than ever for parents to drift away. Weakly involved mothers and fathers can convince themselves that these things really *are* someone else's responsibility.

As things stand, many mothers and fathers are minimally involved in the school lives of their children. According to a major study released by the federal government in 1990, only half of all eighth-graders' parents have any contact with their child's school in the course of a year. Forty-eight percent of students say that only "once or twice" or "not at all" have they discussed what they are studying with their parents. "The American family," mourns New York State Teacher of the Year John Taylor Gatto, "no longer is a factor in the education of its own children."

American parents tend to hand responsibility for their child's education over to the schools right after first grade, according to Harold Stevenson's research. Asian parents, meanwhile, are just starting to take their children's academic lives seriously at that point. Chinese and Japanese parents actually undertake fewer "educational" activities with their preschoolers than American parents do. But they spend many more hours helping their elementary-age and older children with schoolwork, and they are in frequent contact with teachers throughout their child's scholastic career.

Why are American parents so little involved in their kids' studies? The single-parent family is one big culprit. Research shows that children with an absent mother or father receive much less help with school planning and homework than boys and girls in intact families do.

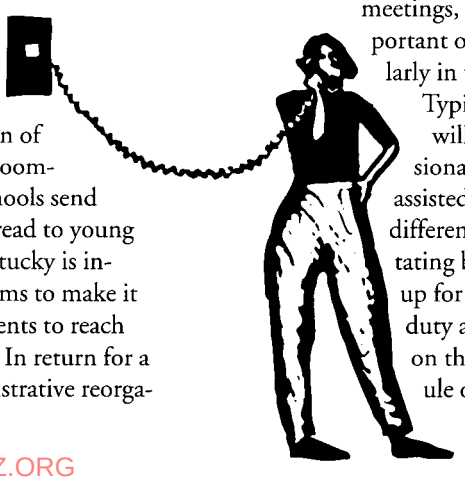
Hectic two-earner homes are also part of the problem. Parents are unavailable, often even unreachable, during school hours. Children return to empty houses where TV or peers fill the afternoon, or they spend those prime hours between school dismissal and dinner in "after-school" programs that generally amount to little more than low-grade group babysitting. In the evenings, overseeing and discussing schoolwork is but one of many tasks competing for the parents' attention.

Many mothers and fathers, then, have written themselves out of their offspring's education. Sometimes, though, the school writes the parents out. Though teachers like to complain about a lack of parental support, surveys show that they are often reluctant to allow parents roles of substance and authority. Part of the problem is that public schools are government enterprises, guaranteeing that politicians, bureaucrats, taxpayers, and public-employee unions will end up fighting over the turf. Parents—the true customers of the schools—are reduced to nothing more than just another political interest.

Some school systems make small gestures to encourage the participation of mothers and fathers. In Bloomfield, Connecticut, the schools send home texts for parents to read to young children. The state of Kentucky is installing phones in classrooms to make it easier for teachers and parents to reach each other during the day. In return for a hefty pay raise and administrative reorganization, teachers in Rochester, New York, are supposed to visit the home of each of their students once a year (there has been much resistance among teachers). Chicago tried to hand control of its schools directly to parents serving on grassroots boards, but the plan was substantially struck down by lawsuits and political resistance.

Most public schools are somewhere between lukewarm and openly resentful toward parent activism. Teacher John Gatto argues that this is the major barrier to better schools today, and one that must be attacked energetically. "Family is the main engine of education. If we use schooling to break children away from parents," he writes, "we're going to continue to have the horror show we have right now." Gatto urges schools to get out of the way so that educational links between children and families can be re-established. He argues for "releasing the stranglehold of institutions on family life," and calls for efforts "to promote during school time confluences of parent and child that will strengthen family bonds."

There are models that could be copied. One of the oldest is the cooperative nursery-school movement, which dates back three-quarters of a century in this country, and longer in Europe. At the heart of the cooperative ideal is the notion that parents should take responsibility for organizing and running the school, with one group handing it on to another as children graduate up to higher levels. In thousands of co-ops nationwide, parents set the budget, raise the money, hire staff, choose activities, make decisions in executive groups and full meetings, and (most important of all) serve regularly in the classroom. Typically, each class will have one professional teacher who is assisted every day by a different parent on a rotating basis. Parents sign up for their days on duty and, depending on the size and schedule of the school, end



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up spending one to three days every month in their child's room. If you don't co-op, your kid doesn't stay.

My wife and I have been involved with our children in several co-ops in different parts of the country. Each has had a distinctive personality and history; each has been very good for our kids and comparatively painless to run. Co-ops are a marvelous way to get enthusiastic and dedicated talent into a schoolroom, and they keep parents informed and interested in their child's friends and school experiences. They help young children avoid separation fears at school, because mom or dad shows up regularly in the classroom. And they hold down costs—so the schools remain accessible to families with modest incomes.

The expectation that parents will actively participate in the work of the school is one important reason why non-government schools are so successful. As John Chubb of the Brookings Institution and Terry Moe of Stanford University reported in 1960, "Private schools...do a much better job of promoting parent involvement. Indeed, private schools get more participation out of parents of lower socioeconomic status than public schools get out of parents of higher socioeconomic status," even though parents' participation usually increases rapidly as their socioeconomic status rises.

The Resurrection School in Harlem, which regularly achieves positive academic results with troubled students, is typical of these institutions. Its school handbook warns parents that they are in the wrong place if they "think their responsibilities begin and end with sending the child to school and paying the bills." All parents must be active in the Home School Association, which meets every month, and parents of new enrollees must themselves attend a year-long history and theology seminar at the school. As Father Lawrence Lucas, the black priest who is principal, explains, "We don't believe that we can educate a child without the cooperation of the parents."

Karl Zinsmeister is DeWitt Wallace Fellow of the American Enterprise Institute and editor in chief of The American Enterprise.

checked out parents

I led a research team that recently produced the most extensive study ever conducted of the forces in youngsters' lives that affect their interest and performance in school. Over the course of our research, we studied more than 20,000 teenagers and their families in nine very different American communities.

Many of the parents we studied—perhaps a quarter—are remarkably uninvolved in their children's lives, either as sources of support or as providers of guidance and structure. These parents are emotionally aloof. They are lenient about discipline. We termed these mothers and fathers "disengaged."

Disengaged parents have "checked out" of child rearing. They do not know how their child is doing in school, have no idea who their child's friends are, and are not aware of how their child spends his or her spare time. They rarely spend time in activities with their child, and seldom talk with their adolescent about the day's events.

We found that about one-fourth of students are allowed to choose classes without consulting their parents, about 30 percent of parents have no idea how their child is doing in school, and one-third of parents do not know how their child passes free time. More than half of all students said they could bring home grades of *C* or worse without their parents being upset, and one-quarter said they could bring home grades of *D* or worse without consequence.

Only about one-fifth of parents consistently attend school programs. And parental disengagement is not limited to school questions: one-fourth of the students we surveyed said their family "never" does anything together for fun. Only 30 percent said their parents spend some time talking with them each day.

Similar findings were reported in a 1994 Louis Harris survey conducted for the Metropolitan Life company. In that study, 22 percent of high school students said they never talked to their parents about the problems they were having with other students, and 25 percent said they wondered if their parents really loved them. Between one-fourth and one-third of the students surveyed said they wished their parents were more involved in their schoolwork.

About one in four American high-school students, then, has parents who are distant and uninvolved in one or more important ways. And because this estimate comes from surveys of students who have stayed in school, it's likely to be an underestimate.

The Metropolitan Life survey also asked parents to evaluate the parenting of their peers. Half the parents queried thought the majority of other parents left their children alone too much after school, took too little interest in their children's education, failed to motivate their children to do well in school, and failed to discipline their children adequately.

Whatever their shortcomings, permissive or authoritarian parents are at least engaged in the business of parenting. Growing up with disengaged parents is far worse than growing up with overly authoritarian, overly permissive, or otherwise flawed parents. Parental engagement is the single most important contribution to healthy psychological development in a child. Our studies and other research show that adolescents whose parents are not sufficiently involved in their lives are more likely to get into trouble than other youngsters. Parental disengagement is a very good predictor of alcohol and drug abuse, delinquency, violence, suicide, sexual precocity, and other problems—making it one of today's most serious public health problems.

Checked-out parents are also a major source of U.S. academic difficulties and low achievement today. That's why simply reforming schools won't solve our educational and economic deficiencies. We also need to conduct a serious discussion about today's high rate of parental irresponsibility. And the sooner the better.

Laurence Steinberg is a psychologist at Temple University and the author of Beyond the Classroom: Why School Reform Has Failed and What Parents Need to Do *(Simon and Schuster), from which this was adapted.*

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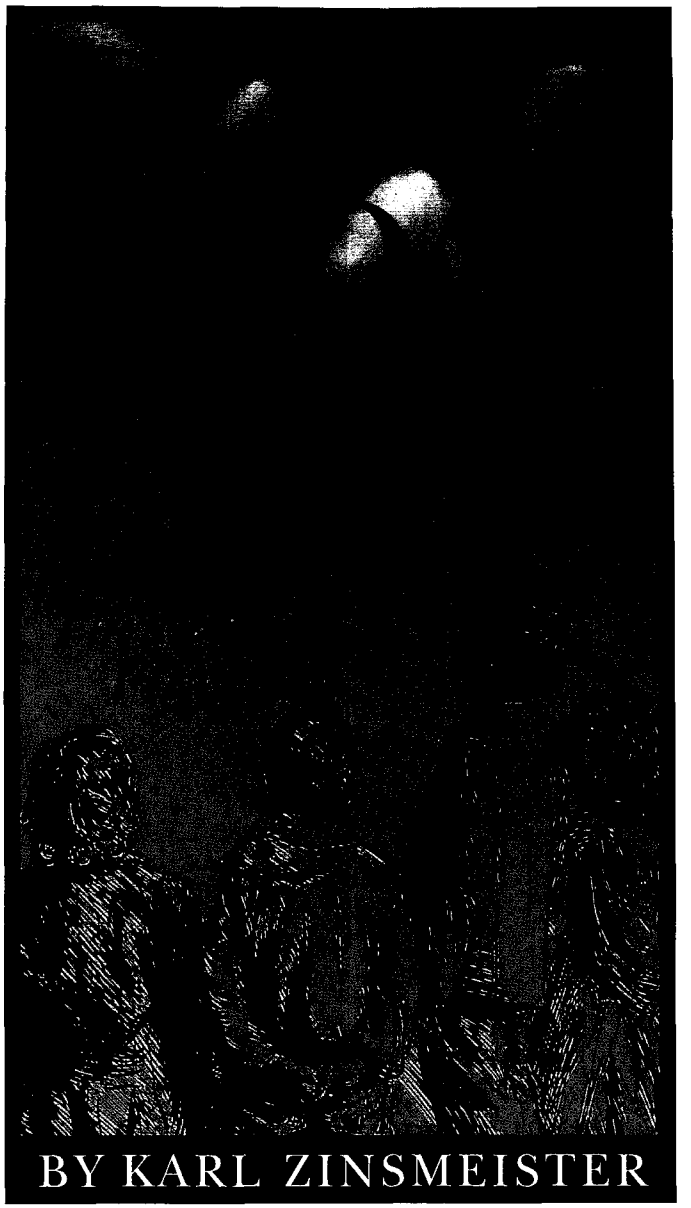

BY KARL ZINSMEISTER

There are two ways to lead people to success. One way is to require hard work that meets high standards. This is the method that good schools have traditionally followed. Patrick Welsh, a veteran teacher at an urban high school, notes that while "modern pedagogy has produced hundreds of new techniques for improving students' writing, none works better than the technique I learned 40 years ago in grammar school from the Sisters of Mercy: Give them a *D* or an *F* on the first paper, and you'll see a miraculous improvement on the second."

The other way to generate success is simply to drop your expectations so low that no one fails. In recent years, this has become a surprisingly popular strategy in American schools. Instead of encouraging excellence, many educators have decided to banish failure by defining it out of existence. Leading children through a system of high demands would hurt their feelings, make them feel bad about themselves, and damage the "self-esteem" of low achievers, they say.

"The term 'self-esteem' has an almost incantatory power" these days, writes elementary school teacher Mike Schmoker in *Education Week*. "Every discussion in education takes a bow in its direction." Self-esteem has been "sentimentalized. It has become less a quality to be slowly earned than one quickly and easily given."

A few years ago, a group of public school teachers explained to me some of the ways a "self-esteem" emphasis had trivialized their work routines. In one school, a program to reward perfect attendance had been loosened up to the point where any child showing up three weeks in a row receives a special award and free pizza. "We have kids winning 'recognition' who've skipped weeks of school throughout the year. It's a farce," complained one instructor. Another teacher described his school's "Proud Board," where students are encouraged to advertise their personal achievements. "It's crazy the things that get posted. You know, 'Jennifer Perkins got herself an '85 Camaro. She's proud.' That kind of stuff."

Teacher Schmoker comments that "there is something sadly comical about whole auditoriums full of students being told, indiscriminately, to feel good about themselves, even to stand up (I've seen this) and give testimonials on how much they like themselves. Never mind any concern for humility or any mention of the price that real self-respect demands."

Even our best schools are now plagued by low standards and academic triviality. A public elementary school my son attended for a few years is a perfect example. Sitting about a half-mile from the Cornell University campus, it enrolls lots of smart kids, has plenty of money, great facilities, lots of teachers with graduate degrees—and an unbelievably misguided curriculum. The school is simultaneously doing away with desks (too hierarchical), science projects (too competitive), phonics and math drill (boring), separate grades for children of different ages (stifling), and report cards (elitist—the move is toward "interviews," "individual journals," and student "portfolios" instead). Children in many classes are told to call their teachers by their first names. While we were involved, the first-grade classes combined to stage a musical on—I'm serious—"equal rights for the insect population."

Meanwhile, I know intelligent fourth and fifth graders enrolled in this school who do not know how to pronounce the letters "-gh" at the end of a word, who have never heard of the Roman Empire or Lewis and Clark, who cannot do repeat multiplication. One middle-class 11-year-old from this school attends a Sunday School class I teach where we do lots of dramatic enactments, and I have had to change our lessons to avoid embarassing him because he can barely read aloud. These children are not victims of poverty or indifference. They are the victims of bad ideology, forced on them by a group of teachers and administrators who came of age in the 1960s and refuse to give up their pet ideas even in the face of miserable results. Chances are, the life prospects of youngsters near you are being ruined today by this same widespread syndrome.

Once the self-esteem beast is let loose in a school it will be exploited by lots of people who have no deficiencies whatever in the self-image department. Virginia teacher Ed Cannon tells of an affluent mother who showed up at his classroom door before 7 a.m. one schoolday to complain about the *B+* he had given her son. "English is his forte; you are destroying his

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self-esteem," she snipped. "Nowadays it's the kids who have the power," another teacher told Pat Welsh. "When they don't do the work, and get lower grades, they scream and yell. Parents side with the kids and pressure teachers to lower standards."

Since the 1960s the trend in U.S. schools has been away from authority and formal learning, and toward individual liberation and free expression. "Healthy kids can teach themselves what they need to know" is how Grace Llewellyn puts it in *The Teenage Liberation Handbook.* This inclination shows up in many areas. When, for instance, writing is assigned to secondary school students today, "it tends to take the form of 'personal expression'—with assignments calling for first-person narratives that describe what the student has felt or experienced," notes education expert Daniel Singal. "Essays in which the writer marshals evidence to support a coherent, logical argument are all too rare. Since that kind of exercise might dampen creativity it must be minimized."

Yet as writer and educator Al Lefcowitz points out, creative work only becomes possible after certain rudiments have been mastered. "There are...conventions and forms that really exist and through which one creates.... The kind of return to basics I would like to see...would require rote learning, memorization (including poetry), accurate knowledge of basic facts—when things happened and where things are." Only basic education of this sort, he argues, can get students off the merry-go-round of subjectivity and reconnect them with sources of knowledge outside themselves.

The strange thing about today's emphasis on personal feelings, self-direction, and permissiveness in education is that there is no evidence this helps children learn. Investigations in psychology, human development, and educational theory all demonstrate that, as Nobel laureate Friedrich Hayek summarizes, "man is not born wise, rational, and good, but has to be taught to become so." Learning how to behave, Hayek reminds us, is the source rather than the product of understanding. Today's reluctance to train, polish, and, where necessary, blunt our children's native impulses is thus actually making it harder for them to become insightful and decent human beings.

Editor Brooks Alexander warns against "a breed of young people who have learned to feel good about themselves while behaving in ways that are ruthlessly anti-social." He blames a system of education that resists linking children with the ethics, ideas, and disciplines by which people have traditionally found their place in society, that instead "turns students into autonomous units of will and ego."

Applied to adolescents in particular, the "praise and liberation" method of schooling seems very nearly the opposite of what's needed. Where teens gather there is typically no great shortage of self-indulgence, personal love, or feelings of individual importance. Surveys from the University of Michigan's Institute for Social Research, for instance, show that high school seniors say by four to one that they are "satisfied" with themselves, judge themselves to be a "person of worth," and "take a positive attitude" toward themselves. (Research by Stanley Rothman of Smith College, incidentally, shows that self-esteem levels are at least as high among blacks as among whites.) In moderation, self-regard is healthy. But hard statistical measures show that a majority of today's self-satisfied kids are unable to write a persuasive letter, to date the Civil War, or to calculate simple interest. Given that, a little more self-doubt might not be such a bad thing.

But perhaps the self-esteem emphasis that now dominates our schools is motivated by something other than the long-term interests of students. Is it just a coincidence that the feel-good rationale against "pushing kids too hard" gives lazy parents, teachers, and administra-

THE FEEL-GOOD GOES TO SCHOOL

For some reason, Staten Island's Public School 5 rose above the expected mess, ranking first among New York City's public schools in standardized reading and math tests. But one thing didn't click. "Patricia Walsh couldn't figure out how her daughter scored in the ninety ninth percentile in reading, yet could not read street signs," the *New York Post* reported. STOP was baffling; YIELD was unfathomable. Other top graduates at School 5 couldn't do simple addition or write a sentence.

After complaints from parents, the Board of Education's Office of Special Investigations uncovered widespread cheating at School 5, but not by sneaky students. The school's principal, Murray Brenner, "altered answer sheets," charged the Schools Chancellor of New York City. Wrong answers were erased and punched out overlay sheets were used to make the correct circles. Linda Moschello, scoring in the ninety-ninth percentile in math, plummeted to the eighteenth percentile after re-testing.

While pleading guilty to an unrelated charge of falsifying business records in the school's supplies account, Brenner denied the test-tampering charge and retired before the Board took any additional actions. Linda Moschello transferred to a parochial school. "In Catholic school," her mother says, "they almost didn't let her make her Confirmation because she couldn't pass the written test."

Except for being so blatant, the exam-fixing at School 5 isn't all that unusual today. Throughout the system, textbooks and tests are being dumbed-down so students score higher. Students learn less and feel better. In 1992, an international study by the Educational Testing Service shows American students ranking last in math achievement (we trail Slovenia), yet the same students rank first in the world about how good they feel about their math skills.

By contrast, in the 1950s the Catholic grade school in my neighborhood produced high math skills, despite class sizes of 60 and low-paid nuns for teachers. Students were lined up at the classroom door and required to recite multiplication tables before going home for lunch. If any answer was wrong, you didn't eat.

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tors a humane-sounding justification for lower-intensity effort?

High demands scare people. Some students and parents have to be confronted. Teachers must work harder. Schools are held accountable. In the short run, high standards produce more grief for everyone. So the cowardly and indolent follow easier routes. Rather than failing students, for instance, they resort to "social promotion," which is less painful, even if ultimately more harmful.

In today's public schools, "Johnny can't fail," notes professor Bruce Edwards. "No matter how poorly Johnny has performed, our benevolent, paternalistic educational system—the perfect analogue to our welfare system—has by and large found a way to promote Johnny to the next grade." This is malpractice, plain and simple, but the education establishment has prevented the public from recognizing as much by employing "social justice" arguments. Educators assure us they are protecting "victims"—though the result is often the opposite.

Because there are no incentives for change *within* today's public school monopolies, many educators see no alternative to our current mediocrity. "An alarming number of teachers don't think they can get average kids, the majority of students, to put forth a sufficient effort in school," writes Schmoker. So they complain about the weak motivation of their students while practicing nearly automatic promotion. And grades, which might be used to point out problems to students, "are higher than ever."

Figures from the College Board, which oversees the SAT test, document this decay. In 1972, when data first began to be collected, 28 percent of college-bound seniors reported having an *A* or *B* high school average. By 1993, *83 percent* had an *A* or *B* average. Given that the average SAT score fell by 35 points over the same period, this clearly represents outrageous grade inflation.

Schmoker asks, "Can we, in an attempt to be 'encouraging,' be so accommodating and still expect the level of achievement that makes for real self-esteem?" No, he answers. "The best we can do is teach students, in an atmosphere of compassion and perhaps more active participation, that self-respect is earned, often with considerable difficulty, and equip them to earn it."

Sadly, the educators now trivializing curricula and dropping expectations are willing to accept student ignorance as a price of their liberation experiments. "They fear rote learning more than no learning," summarizes Harvard education professor Jeanne Chall. And you will notice that it is usually only individuals who have already benefited from a rigorous basic education who assume that those rigors and those basics are not important for others. They take for granted, and rebel against, the very disciplines that have made them competent individuals. Meanwhile, folks who lack Ivy League decals on the backs of their Volvos tend not to think of drill in spelling, grammar, and algebra as quite so pointless.

The children of the educational liberationists are muddling through today's undemanding schools, because they have books at home, music lessons, Sierra Club vacations, and other middle-class resources to fall back on. The real price is being paid by youngsters from disorganized families—who come to school without much in the way of learning or self-control, and now leave filled with the official insight that success in life comes not so much via perspiration as through inspiration and doing one's own thing. Here as in so many other places, it is the marginal citizens, in whose name the liberationist creed is enacted, who are ultimately its worst victims.

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"WE WERE WRONG"

Psychologist William Coulson helped found the movement to emphasize "self-esteem" as a path to school success. Today, he travels the country confessing, "I take responsibility. I was part of this approach which has taken over our education system. *We were wrong.*" Coulson now encourages teachers to "stand up for a return to academics. That is really what is needed."

What explains this turnabout? Partly, new research debunking the notion that boosting a child's image of himself brings greater competence. For instance, a recent, exhaustive review of different classroom techniques known as "Project Follow-through" tracked 7,000 children at 139 sites across the country and discovered that the educational models focusing on self-esteem "resulted in lower academic scores than any other model evaluated." On the other hand, the instructional methods that produced the best student performance stressed effective teaching of academics and made no attempt to enhance good feeling except by rewarding good work—on the grounds that self-esteem is simply a byproduct of achievement.

"Critics," summarize the project analysts, "have predicted that the emphasis on tightly controlled instruction might discourage children from freely expressing themselves, and thus inhibit the development of self-esteem and other affective skills." Real-life results, however, show that "In fact, this is not the case."

Leading researchers of self-esteem like Morris Rosenburg, Thomas Moeller, and Alfie Kohn now conclude that self-esteem does little or nothing to enhance academic success. More darkly, pushing the concept may actually bring new problems.

A 1996 study in *Psychological Review*, the Journal of the American Psychological Association, indicates that an artificial emphasis on self-regard can actually increase violence and other anti-social behavior. "Conventional wisdom has regarded low self-esteem as an important cause of violence," note the authors. But this is not what the research shows. "Instead, violence appears to be most commonly a result of threatened egotism—that is, highly favorable views of the self that are disrupted by some person or circumstance."

Many schools today are lowering their grading scales, eliminating honor rolls and honors courses, and doing away with academic competitions like spelling bees and testing with the idea that students will improve their output if only their self-images are lifted. Exercises specifically designed to make students think well of themselves have become part of the curriculum in some places. All this because of a widespread view that, as Bill Clinton put it when he was governor of Arkansas, "a child's self-esteem is the most important contributor to education."

The only problem: None of this is true.

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SELF-ESTEEM

BY FLORENCE KING

Self-esteem? I'll tell you about self-esteem, and I didn't learn it from some gassy focus group.

Back in 1988 I turned in the manuscript of my new book and my publisher sent it out for copyediting. The copyeditor I drew was a web-footed cretin who should have been in an institution learning how to make brooms. She had a tin ear, no sense of rhythm, and her spelling was in the dyslexia range—she "corrected" 14 words. Finding my sentences too stark for her tastes, she added empty-calorie easements like "consider for a moment," and whenever she came to a particularly violent opinion, she softened it with "alas and alack." Worst of all, she fiddled with a parody in which the word order was the whole point of the joke.

Besides being an idiot she was also a slob. Thanks to her erasures and different ink colors, the manuscript was a mess even before I started working on it. After raising holy hell with the publisher, I spent three solid days correcting her "corrections," and restoring my original sentences. By the time I was finished the manuscript looked so awful that I couldn't let it go to the printer in such a state. I'm famous for my neatness, and besides, authors have to pay for errors we cause printers to make, so I reprinted the whole thing and copyedited the new manuscript myself.

While the copyediting debacle was going on, I was having another battle with my landlord over the dirty entry and hallway of my building. It's a small-town digs with just four apartments and no big-city amenities like janitorial service. The woman who used to clean it died, and in typical Southern fashion the landlord never got around to hiring anyone else.

I kept complaining, and finally he got some woman to do it. I don't know where he found her, but the moment I saw her I knew what lay in store. She looked like one of those slatterns who goes around whining, "I did the best I could." Her bucket held plain water from the tap out back—i.e., cold—and there was no soap or cleaning fluid in it, just a faint whiff of Clorox. She had a dirty mop, and she herself looked dirty. In short, a case of low self-esteem.

I listened to her desultory swishing. Not once did she go outside and change her water. When she had finished and gone, I inspected her work. The hallway smelled sour, and she had missed the two things I had specifically complained about: the grease on the step where somebody's garbage bag had dripped, and the sticky banister railing.

In my mind, she was the copyeditor, and I'm nothing if not thorough. I called my landlord and said, "You're going to knock $25 off my rent and I'm going to give you the cleanest damn building in Christendom." And so, in the middle of salvaging my manuscript, I abandoned blue pencils for mops and brushes and started scrubbing.

When I finished, the ammonia fumes were so strong that the mailman had a choking fit and the paper boy sneezed in my face. As I stood there inhaling the clean smell and watching the sun dance over the gleaming tiles, I felt *great* about myself—in the midst of a potentially disastrous publishing crisis that could have damaged my reputation as a writer, I was proud of being such a good janitress.

Self-esteem does not come from Self-Esteem Workshops, Self-Esteem Resources Centers, or Self-Esteem Crisis Hot Lines. Like life itself, it begins with a tiny seed. If that defeated woman had done a spit-and-polish job of cleaning my building, she would have felt a little better about herself. Not much, maybe, but a little. If the copyeditor had done such a good job on my book that I had written her a thank-you note—as I always do when I'm pleased—she would have felt good about herself. That's how it starts.

The "secret" of self-esteem is no secret at all. It is found in Robert E. Lee's farewell to his troops after Appomattox: "You will take with you the satisfaction that proceeds from a knowledge of duty faithfully performed."

Florence King's latest book is The Florence King Reader *(St. Martin's).*

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Advice to the College Bound

Just Say No to Harvard

by Edward E. Ericson, Jr.

Parents of college-bound children are doing plenty of fretting these days. And the more they read, the more they fret. They see college as the necessary passageway to the full, rich life that they want for their kids, and they are willing to do what they can to provide it. If skyrocketing tuition takes a second income, so be it. Anything for their kids.

But something else nags, too. College should have a higher, more ennobling aim than enhancing earning power. It should not just train a worker for a job but also educate the whole person. It should develop some modicum of culture in the students—and in their kid!—by introducing them to the broad array of academic disciplines and the long historical sweep of human experience, by giving them the solid base of knowledge that can foster lifelong learning and maybe even, eventually, wisdom.

Yet parents hear all these horror stories about life on campus. Dorms have gone co-ed. Bathrooms, too, so that we can learn to "be comfortable with our bodies." Crime is a serious enough problem that the government requires each campus to report its crime rate. Statistics about date rape and sexual harassment pepper the newspapers. Racial and ethnic tensions are balkanizing the student body. And the professors—it's hard to know what to think of them. Brainy people may deserve extra latitude, but, really, they seem to be saying such outlandish, perverse things.

It gives me no joy to bring bad news. But it is my considered opinion that the situation in which our colleges now find themselves is desperate. The horror stories are not only all-too-representative; they are merely the tip of the iceberg. In my view, the academy is the most corrupt social institution in our nation. And as a general rule, the more prestigious the institution, the more decadent the intellectual and social milieu.

Parents may be chiefly concerned about the lurid carnival of life in the residence halls, and I appreciate that. But my chief concern is with academics, where we professors enter in. Parents may wish us professors to join them sympathetically in some sort of united front between home and school to move the young from ignorance to understanding. They may be willing to settle for our doing no harm. What they will encounter in all too many cases is professors whose mission in life is to liberate stupid students from the traditional values and virtues drummed into them by their provincial parents. After all, parents are authority figures in the oppressive hierarchical structure that must be subverted.

In short, a great disconnect exists today between most American families and the university. You will feel it keenly if you are Christian. You will feel it almost as keenly if you consider yourself conservative. And if you are both conservative and Christian, heaven help you. This is the result of what has come to be called "postmodernism" with its accompanying "political correctness."

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Many good books have appeared decrying the execrable condition of the politically correct, postmodernist university. The granddaddy of them all, Allan Bloom's *The Closing of the American Mind,* gets to the root issue when it asserts, "The university has to stand for something." American education today yields students who, in Bloom's words, have "learned to doubt beliefs before they believed in anything." Students' minds, then, are not open but empty. Bloom says that "every educational system has a moral goal that it tries to attain and that informs its curriculum. It wants to produce a certain kind of human being." In today's academy such talk sounds quaint.

> The academy is the most corrupt social institution in our nation. And as a rule, the more prestigious the institution, the more decadent the intellectual and social milieu.

Curriculum reveals what an academic institution believes in. Not long ago, it was standard for colleges to require that a number of courses be taken by all students. These typically started with some courses in the history of Western civilization and included wide-ranging survey courses in the humanities, introductory courses in the natural and social sciences, and competency courses in written composition, public speaking, and a foreign language. Some such array of courses was seen as the lowest common denominator for producing authentically educated adults. Colleges used to *believe* that breadth of learning was essential to liberal education. They *believed* in depth as well, and so a major in some academic discipline was required. Here, too, a considerable degree of prescription was common. Colleges assumed that there was an order to learning, a hierarchy of knowledge. Some things were more important to know than other things; some things were important to know before other things. And the educated knew more than the uneducated about how to shape a program of study.

Little of this familiar curriculum is left in our prestigious institutions. A new study of 50 such schools by the National Association of Scholars, *The Dissolution of General Education: 1914-1993,* is filled with graphs and charts that all slope downward from left to right on the page, comprehensively documenting curricular shrinkage. Even in the few general-education requirements remaining, content is evaporating. All the news in this report is bad news.

Now, it is not impossible to obtain a good education at a prestigious institution. The best bet is to find a sympathetic faculty adviser, usually a grizzled and discouraged veteran who can point to the oases of sanity on campus and help shape a coherent individual program of study. Traditional courses remain on the books, though they are offered irregularly and professorial viewpoints are frequently subversive. Such a project requires going against the institutional grain, and few students come out of high school mature and knowledgeable enough to pull it off.

What's that, Jennifer? You say you'd like to have an English major like your mom's, because she is conversant on so many authors and subjects? You want to be sure to read some Great Books? You'd rather take survey courses in British literature, American literature, and world literature than such swell courses as "Rebel Without a Cause/Sweet Little Sixteen: The Social Construction of the Teenager in American Culture, 1948-64"? Sorry, the Ivy League's not the place for you. How about Little Backwater College?

But imagine for a moment if Jennifer actually did go to Little Backwater. She gets an English teacher who, for lack of time or interest or sophistication, has not kept up with the latest trends. He has been so swamped with student papers in four courses a semester, not to mention heavy loads of committee work and academic and personal advising, that he has never gotten around to trying to do the publishing he once thought he might. His students never learn about deconstructionism, the new historicism, (uncapitalized) marxism. Nor do the students ever hear such trendy names as Derrida, de Man, Foucault, Lacan, Kristeva. The teacher has read a bit on postmodernism but is uncomfortably vague about it. Still, he and his colleagues have the students read Donne, Swift, Johnson, Austen, Wordsworth, Dickens, Conrad, one or two Eliots, one or two Brownings; also Thoreau, Dickinson, Whitman, Hemingway, and Faulkner; then some Dante, Goethe, Dostoevsky, Tolstoy. He dutifully rereads the familiar texts every time he teaches them. They still excite him, just as they did when he first read them as a student. He seeks to relate what they say to life, focusing on the general moral principles highlighted in them.

Now, just how much has Jennifer suffered for her *déclassé* choice of college? She has missed out on big-name professors, a campus full of highly academic students, cutting-edge trends, prestige. On the other hand, she has learned about the shape of the past, read major authors, made friends with professors whose work is characterized by a sense of mission, lived in a dorm where decency prevails. So it all depends on what she wants from college. If she hopes to appropriate the wisdom of the ages, to have literature affect her own moral life for the good, to engage in her own spiritual quest for truth and for meaning in life, it is far from clear that attending Little Backwater has been a mistake.

Fortunately, the stark choice just sketched out is not necessary. There remain colleges and universities that, in varying degrees, have resisted the fashionable nonsense that dominates the elite institutions, yet are widely recognized for high academic quality. The lure of the cutting edge is almost indescribably powerful among academics, and scarcely a college worth mentioning has not been pulled toward it. But differences in degree can be important and considerable. And one can even make a case for

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having a few trendy professors around on a mostly traditional campus, so that students can be startled into thinking things through for themselves. The trick is to find those institutions that have not bowed the knee to the academic Baal.

The best place to start your search is *The National Review College Guide*. Despite the auspices, this is not a listing of colleges devoted to conservatism; there are hardly any. Rather, its aim is to demonstrate "the availability of a quality liberal arts education in an atmosphere free of politicization and intimidation." The *Guide* lists what its editors consider America's top 50 liberal arts schools. Not all meritorious colleges have made this somewhat idiosyncratic list. The ones that have are a mixed bag. A few are large and famous; more are small, and some of these are rather obscure. Perhaps most noteworthy is how many of these colleges are religious, some of them vestigially so but others of them vitally. But here a strong warning is in order. The fact that a college or university has a historic religious affiliation is no guarantee of sanity, decency, or intellectual rigor. The majority seek acceptance in the academy at large, have aped the secular pacesetters, and are religious in name only.

Growing numbers of academics realize that some sort of reform is necessary to save the secular university from its self-destructive tendencies.

Next you should check the member institutions of the Coalition of Christian Colleges and Universities. Some of these 80 or so unabashedly religious schools are indeed Little Backwaters. Others have deservedly solid reputations; four make the *National Review* list. It goes without saying that a given Christian college is not for everyone. But in our dark age a search of this list might yield some would-be collegians a hidden treasure.

To give some flavor of an education at a Christian college, let me quickly sketch pertinent information about Calvin College, a Reformed Christian college of almost 4,000 students that both belongs to the Coalition and is listed by *National Review* (to the discomfort of some of its politically liberal faculty members). I trust I may be forgiven for choosing the college where I teach; it is the one I know best. As one index of its quality, Calvin sends more than its share of graduates into various professional and graduate schools at the leading universities. For example, it ranks eighth nationally among undergraduate producers of those who go on to earn doctorates in English, placing it ahead of most of the prestigious colleges. Though it lacks a publish-or-perish requirement for tenure, most of its faculty still are active in scholarly research and publication. A number of its professors have taught at places with greater prestige and higher salaries; they are drawn to Calvin by a shared sense of commitment to the college's mission, which gives primacy to the development of the Christian mind. Because it was established to educate the children of its sponsoring denomination, the Christian Reformed Church, it is not highly selective in its admissions policy, but its best students rank with the best anywhere. People at the college talk incessantly about establishing and maintaining a sense of community, and some of this talk is actually practiced.

Calvin's curriculum is not the most traditional among Coalition colleges; it is probably middle-of-the-road. Students are required to take six courses in history, philosophy, and religion; a course apiece in mathematics, the biological sciences, and the physical sciences; a course in literature, in the fine arts, and in either literature or the fine arts; a course in either psychology or sociology and in either political science or economics. Four semesters of a foreign language are also required, as are competency courses in written rhetoric and in oral rhetoric, and three activity courses in physical education. Limited exemptions based on high school work are permitted, and the core curriculum is slightly relaxed for students in professional programs. Some faculty are exploring ways to increase the common reading done by all students without altering the core curriculum's structure.

Of course, the very notion of a Christian college seems a contradiction in terms to many in our secular times. Yet if Allan Bloom is right that a university must stand for something, questions of legitimacy should be addressed not to Christian colleges but to secular universities. They stand for nothing. Abandoning the academy's historic purpose of searching for truth, their members jeer at the very idea of "truth."

Such is the impasse that skepticism is now beginning to surface among members of the scholastic elite. Growing numbers of academics realize that some sort of reform is necessary to save the secular university from its self-destructive tendencies. Chastened leftists are critiquing current uses of multiculturalism. Disillusioned feminists are describing the doctrinaire miasma of women's studies departments. The aforementioned National Association of Scholars, belittlingly labeled right-wing but actually composed of persons of a wide range of political loyalties, is calling for a renewal of reasoned scholarship in a free society. Christian scholars, whether in Christian colleges or secular universities, have banded together into such discipline-bound organizations as the Society of Christian Philosophers, the Conference on Faith and History, the Conference on Christianity and Literature. Despite such glimmers of hope, the day when the American university finds its soul again is a long way off.

Meanwhile, parents and students must navigate as best they can through what for many of them is an indubitably hostile environment. They are living in what Czech President Vaclav Havel calls the first atheistic civilization. And it shows.

Edward E. Ericson, Jr., is a professor of English at Calvin College.

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Cheers for No-Name U.

by Jacob Neusner

Illustration by Brian Ajhar

The vast majority of college students stay in their home states, and enormous numbers live within a few miles of home—or at home. Add up the community colleges, the state colleges, the commuting universities, and even the principal campuses of the great state systems and what do you find? Nearly everybody. Only a negligible handful of students receive their education in the few schools that preen in the pecking order of rankings, gathering their pupils from all over the country. Like politics, most higher education is local.

Those of us who teach in local colleges serve the place-bound who come to us because we are all there is: the commuters, the part-timers, the unconventional students, the senior citizens, the women beyond child-raising, the early retirees and the military retirees—almost everybody except the handful of 18- to 22-year-olds with the money or the skin tone to get themselves a place among the entitled.

I teach at the University of South Florida (USF), a part of the Florida State University system with campuses in Tampa, St. Petersburg, Lakeland, Sarasota, and Fort Myers. I came here after 20 years of teaching at Brown University, an Ivy League school founded in 1764. When I arrived—recruited for the Florida system by a state senator with whom I served on a federal commission—everyone wanted to know, "Why?" Why had I left a hot school that was small, selective, prestigious, old, and in demand, for a massive, urban, 30-year-old multiversity, the typical full-service university on the urban frontier. Here we do not practice affirmative action, because everybody comes anyhow, and we do not condescend to our black and Hispanic students, let alone the Arabs and the Indians and the Asians, because everybody belongs by right.

My deepest convictions about teaching and academic professionalism are at the root of my preference for USF over Brown. I actually think it is a healthier place, a better place for learning. My students at Brown (always with exceptions) were children of parents willing to spend four or five times what public education costs on a degree of indeterminate worth, one lacking all course requirements. These students constantly claimed entitlements. Every chance they had, they would play "Notice me!" After all, they'd gotten into Brown! In my time, Brown students were geniuses at creating public scandals, if not at much else. (Recently the black women circulated lists of the black men who go out with white women, for instance.) And, of course, everything was theirs by right; they owed thanks to no one. Self-important and cynical, they made the classroom into a daily contest to see who could take the most class time and thereby garner the most adolescent prestige.

By contrast, my students at USF—nearly all of them commuting from home, working at part-time or even full-time jobs—know none of the trendy little games sophisticated Ivy Leaguers play to establish position. They do not think anyone owes them anything, and they're thankful for the smallest courtesy.

One small tale tells the story. I make it a practice to have students invent questions for their exams, on the theory that the quality of the question, as much as the accuracy and balance of the answer, will attest to the students' learning. Just now a USF student apologized, "I wanted to ask myself such-and-such a question, but I got it from you." At Brown, in exactly the same situation, I recall a student saying, "You mentioned such-and-such a question, but that's the very one I had in mind when I came to class." The first student showed honest simplicity, the other played the angles. Whom would you rather teach? Or, if a parent, have raised?

Two memories of Brown stick out. First, the student who said, "How dare you criticize my writing? Who are you anyhow?" And second, the freshman who said, "How can you give me a *B* when I have never gotten anything but *A*s before—and I told you I have to have an *A*! Who do you think you are?" I remember these things not because they happened once, but because they happened every semester. Brown students were constantly harping on "how much tuition I paid for this course—and therefore you owe me...." Fill in the end of the sentence yourself.

But there is another difference between No-Name University and Big-Name University: most of the students here live at home, and all of the students I taught at Brown lived on campus.

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That means the students retain close ties to home and family, growing up in an integral community. They hear opinions other than those of their peer group, respond to concerns different from those of arm-swinging 18-year-olds. And we at Florida No-Name Number 3 face a classroom that gives new meaning to diversity. Here people follow their curiosity.

For instance, I taught a course on the Talmud, in English, to the following: the imam of the local mosque, an engineering student, a Muslim feminist, several Bible-believing Christians, a retired administrator in the Social Security system, two retired professors, the head of plastic surgery at our medical school, conventional degree-seeking students aged 19 to 45, and so forth. For the younger students, working together with people in their fifties through eighties as complete equals raised the stakes of the classroom: learning was all that mattered. Everyone came to solve problems together.

Living familiar, everyday lives, the students come to us for what we have to teach, see each another mainly in class, and still participate in the ordinary world in which they have grown up and to which they return every night. Learning for them does not take place on a narrow island, in a protected enclave populated by the young and smart, if also the aimless and self-absorbed. The campus here has no walls. The community flows in and out, in tidal waves.

Purposeful and effective, well-educated citizens will come from the healthy, normal life lived at home, in families and communities that give students their place and learning its context. On the other hand, it would be difficult to design a psychologically more corrosive situation than that formed of residential late-adolescent students, unemployed and healthy, with worries only for themselves. What do the elite college students see of disappointment and disillusion, of sickness and death, of fatigue and age? Yet for the humanities, these primal experiences define what is at stake in learning: the record of human experience, of lives lived in anguish, and what humanity has learned from them.

A generation ago, no one doubted the value of education among "the best and the brightest." The elite schools today lie in shambles and disgrace. Who wants to emulate them? Stanford has turned its curriculum into an engine of propaganda. Lacking requirements of weight, a Brown degree certifies nothing. The English department at Georgetown has repealed literature. Berkeley is a zoo, Harvard a jungle filled with prestige-hungry predators, and Yale cannot even keep the roof from leaking. But no matter: higher education in this country still prospers. That is because most of the students and professors work at No-Name Universities where, too provincial to follow the trends and too professional to have time to, everyone just soldiers on, doing the job that the people of this country want higher education to do for their and their childrens' future.

Rabbi Jacob Neusner is the author, with his son Noam Neusner, of The Price of Excellence: Universities in Conflict during the Cold War Era, *and other books.*

Learning Outside the College Ghetto

by Karl Zinsmeister

A few years ago, author George Gilder wrote in his Harvard reunion yearbook that since leaving the university, he had engaged in "a laborious effort to rediscover the truths taught to me by my mother and...my father, and untaught during my time in college." In a similar vein, the poet Robert Frost told Dartmouth graduates in a 1955 commencement address that he had made a particular effort "to come through college holding my own so that I wouldn't be made over beyond recognition.... It's a poor sort of person, it seems to me, who delights in thinking, 'I have had four years that have transformed me into somebody my own mother won't know.'"

This is an important criticism of university teaching. For colleges not only spread knowledge, they obliterate it as well. And today's institutions of higher learning claim the right to cancel other kinds of learning more and more with each passing year.

Some "unteaching," of course, is valuable—specifically that which breaks down false prejudices. But a good deal of the present variety is directed not at falsehood but rather at common-sense truths, the evolved verdicts of history, and natural human attachments. In areas ranging from sex to language to family structure to religious belief, much of today's professoriate is bent on undermining traditional practice, overthrowing time-tested judgments, and discounting the wisdom of parents, elders, and local communities.

On questions of politics, economics, race, and religion, today's universities tend to be deserts of conformity. Views falling outside a very narrow band are discouraged and even attacked. Despite their superficial diversity and openness, our leading colleges thus tend to create a disturbingly homogeneous product: an elite class possessed of fairly uniform intellectual and moral standards, in whom unfashionable beliefs have largely been excised.

Where is the welcome on campuses today for cradle Catholics, orthodox Jews, or evangelical Protestants (never mind Mormons, Christian Scientists, or Muslims)? How much acceptance is there in the contemporary academy for students who believe (as most Americans do) that there are important biological differences between men and women? How much toleration is there at colleges for the broader public's views on crime, child-rearing, capitalism, homosexuality, capital punishment, and military service?

A recent survey carried out for this magazine (SCAN, September/October 1995) indicated that only 2-6 percent of humanities professors at the typical elite university are Republicans, compared to roughly 35 percent of all Americans. Where is the stimulating range of perspective, the intellectual free-for-all, that colleges claim to sponsor? In a place as mono-minded as the aver-

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age campus, it's not surprising there is so much smugness and active hostility for the "reactionary" ideas students bring with them from their real-life backgrounds.

Universities are strange little islands unto themselves, and simply accepting their annoyances and quirks would be easy enough except for one thing: To a considerable extent universities claim a monopoly on higher education—and the right to preempt, even cancel, intellectual and moral truths learned outside their walls. In this respect, the modern university's "unteaching" is arrogant and even dangerous.

Perhaps a certain amount of standardization and polishing off of individual edges is to be expected in the tumbling process of mass education. But students should actively resist obliteration of the moral and intellectual insights they bring with them to school. One way to do that is to pursue various kinds of *informal* education during the period of formal college training.

As Jacob Neusner hints in his adjoining essay, living at home in a family—or at least in a community setting more naturally variegated by age and experience than the typical college dorm—can give college students a useful grounding in reality. Intermingling volunteer or paid work with one's study can also help. And doing lots of outside reading on your own is important. During my own college years, not one professor ever introduced me to the great conservative intellectual journals like *The Public Interest, Commentary,* or *National Review*—even though these were years when America's political culture was undergoing critical realignments in the conservative direction (I was graduated the year Ronald Reagan took office). Fortunately I discovered these publications myself, but wish I had done so years earlier.

At the Ivy League college I attended, I had much less exposure to old books, the historical record, and the great insights of classic literature than I believe a student ought to. Religious questions were mostly either ignored or discounted. And I learned practically nothing useful about how to create a happy marriage, sex life, family, or home—in fact, I received lots of *counter*productive counsel on these topics. And if you think such subjects are beyond the proper scope of a college education, remember that wise men and women stretching from Plato to Augustine to Austen took the very highest intellectual interest in these matters. Launching students into the world without an exposure to classic, evolved wisdom on such everyday questions constitutes a serious educational failing.

In addition to living and working outside the college ghetto and undertaking lots of private reading and seeking, there are other ways people can round out their college educations. I myself took a year off to live in another country. I participated in a regular discussion group. I committed myself heavily to an athletic team. I spent a lot of time writing or visiting my family. In all of these ways I was able to express and expand on the knowledge that I brought with me to the university. In my classroom work, by contrast, the main expectation was that I would take on somebody else's worldview (usually the professor's!).

For some, participation in a musical group, political club, Bible study, or art guild may be the key. Others might do volunteer work. The point is to pursue a kind of "parallel" schooling against which the claims of the classroom can be tested. This gives students a chance to refine, modify, and extend the embedded values and ideas of their upbringing, instead of letting them atrophy and disappear for want of exercise in the academic environment.

> Colleges not only spread knowledge, they obliterate it as well. And today's institutions of higher learning claim the right to cancel other kinds of learning.

This is not to preach obscurantism. Access to formal academic training is a great gift, and obviously the university's main mission. But it needs to be remembered that there are many legitimate paths to moral and intellectual knowledge, and that university teachers have hardly cornered the wisdom market. My colleague Scott Walter points out that today's most brilliant and original scholars tend to be the sharpest critics of our current academy. The recently deceased Allan Bloom, for instance, translator of Plato and Rousseau and author of *The Closing of the American Mind,* insisted that his barely literate grandparents were far wiser than most of their M.D.- and Ph.D.-beribboned grandchildren.

So: wise students should enter college suspicious of academic authorities as final sources of truth. And they should strive to temper their university education with a disciplined "informal" education. If a student's regional, familial, and personal training is simply supplanted by official schooling, a deformed and very false understanding of the world will result—particularly today, when the universities have become so politically correct, self-righteous, left-wing, and intellectually trendy.

To help easily influenced students keep their feet on the ground, parents, community groups, churches, fraternal organizations, non-academic periodicals, independent scholars, business people, and others need to claim their equal obligation to participate in the education of the young. Older family members, teammates, pastors, good neighbors, and the living and dead exemplars of history are some of society's best teachers. These non-academic educators should stop being intimidated by university experts. They must recognize that when it comes to many aspects of living, their own practical stores of knowledge are quite superior to anything offered by today's lettered elites.

Karl Zinsmeister is DeWitt Wallace Fellow of the American Enterprise Institute, and editor in chief of The American Enterprise.

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TRUE CONFESSIONS OF A Recovering Lawyer

BY JON OLSON

I'm not quite sure why I went to law school in 1985. Most of my college classmates did, but they never had a good reason either. I suppose I thought a law degree would be more practical than a degree in English, history, or a foreign language, while still being more intellectually stimulating than, say, a business degree. Wrong on all counts. If I had earned a less practical master's degree, at least I would have been prepared for some discrete field of labor, rather than being released on society as a licensed dilettante armed with a way of thinking entirely at odds with personal experience.

Nearly every one of my undergraduate friends at Georgetown was bent on a career as the next F. Lee Bailey. When we took the Law School Admission Test (LSAT), the atmosphere in the classroom was so tense that if anyone had snapped a pencil, several people would have dived out the window. But I did well on the LSAT; so I figured law might be right for me. Only later did I find out that the LSAT is nothing like law school, that law school is nothing like the practice of law, and that the practice of law is nothing like life as I knew it.

Perhaps such ignorance explains the growing march of students to the J.D. degree. During the 1994-95 academic year, 135,000 students were enrolled in law schools. In the same year, those schools conferred over 40,000 degrees. Despite having only 5 percent of the world's population, the United States has 70 percent of its lawyers—three for every 1,000 Americans (and in Washington an astounding one lawyer for every 17 people).

Perhaps people pursue law degrees hoping for an intellectual challenge. If so, they are misguided. On a purely theoretical level law may be intellectually invigorating, but very few practitioners earn a living in the rarefied air of constitutional jurisprudence or philosophy of law. The day-to-day practice of law offers precious little in the way of mental stimulation. My own (quite typical) initiation to the noble profession involved 18 months spent slogging through several hundred boxes of fetid documents, researching the insurance coverage dates for the last 50 years of a bankrupt corporation's existence—the mice gnawing through the same papers had more excitement.

One lawyer I knew said his favorite day of the year is the last Saturday in October, when the clocks are set back, because he could bill 25 hours that day.

I have many other stories of soul-flattening tedium (using one's 19 years of education to uncover whether Florida state law prefers *bylaw, by-law,* or *by law* comes to mind), but if you're smart, stories from law school alone will convince you. Take one poor Georgetown friend of mine "lucky" enough to go to one of the most prestigious law schools. The professors' droning appalled him so much that he stopped attending classes and just crammed at exam times. (After landing a good job at a Washington firm, he lasted a couple of years before quitting abruptly in disgust and leaving the country.)

In short, law is no longer, if it ever was, an intellectually demanding profession. The American justice system has been reduced to one maxim: *The law is what is boldly asserted and plausibly maintained.* And I see the "plausibly maintained" part growing less important by the day.

Bold assertion, however, is doing quite well. Maybe it stems from a trait attorneys seem to develop in the second year of law school, when the self-importance of being a lawyer overcomes that part of every person that desires kinship with his fellow man. (Richard Kahlenberg found that his fellow Harvard Law students were even more arrogant than journalists.)

Callousness may be some people's idea of professionalism. In practice, it leads to rather jarring results. I remember the taped deposition of a dying woman who coughed out her life story for the benefit of about 20 lawyers. She reclined on a sofa in her modest living room, the lawyers perched like vultures around her, straining to hear her whispery voice as she related the history of her relationship with her husband, her most intimate medical history, her habits, her hobbies, her hopes. The lead attorney probed in a flat, nasal monotone, following one prosaic question with another, finally asking, "Other than your cough, what other outward signs of your illness did you notice?"

"Well," she paused to raise her hand to her head, "I lost all my hair." With this she pulled off her gray wig, revealing her bald pate. The attorney didn't even pause before launching into his next banality, "At what store did you buy that wig, and how much did you pay for it?"

Lawyers love to fancy themselves as hard workers, and the great majority of them do work very hard, inordinately hard. Partners, for instance, may keep barking instructions at underlings to, from, and on the toilet. (One I'm thinking of spent much time there. His manic travails had so devastated his diges-

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tive tract that he couldn't control the frequent eructations he emitted during client meetings, lunches, etc.)

Lawyers have created an entire fee structure designed to take advantage of their willingness to work night and day—the billable hour. It's amazing the marketplace allows such a scheme to exist. Since there is no connection between the amount of time it takes to accomplish a legal task and the quality of the work done, the billable hour creates a strong incentive to work inefficiently. Instead, the incentive is to find new and unusual ways to stretch time. And that is a task lawyers perform with the utmost efficiency. Especially since the practice of law is filled with a host of tedious assignments, the majority of which merely require showing up. For example, many judges hold weekly calendar calls to ascertain the status of pending cases. On a given day, a firm may have a dozen cases called. Any given case usually requires no more than a trifling response, "Yes, your honor, ready for trial," or "No, your honor, we still haven't deposed our expert on the dangers of baby oil." Yet the two or three hours spent traveling to the courthouse and waiting for the cases to be called can be billed in their entirety to each of the dozen cases the attorney responds to. The bill will show, "Three hours—Calendar Call."

Most firms also have a practice of dividing hours into tenths. Of course, many tasks take much less than six minutes; so the astute attorney can buy time by completing a task quickly and then recording the full billable allotment. For instance, if during the course of the morning you receive ten phone messages, you can return all ten calls in 15 minutes and bill a full hour's work. The more sophisticated might return the calls during lunch, missing most or all of the intended recipients, and chalk up the full billable hour in three to five minutes. One lawyer I knew said his favorite day of the year is the last Saturday in October, when the clocks are set back, because he could bill 25 hours that day.

The progressive permeation of this occult science of law into all facets of modern life has had two unhealthy results: the degradation of the legal system and the growing inability of the profession to provide meaningful work for its practitioners.

The second issue is particularly distressing. No one disputes the high cost to society of our crazy-quilt of laws and the resulting proliferation of attorneys—aka, "free-lance bureaucrats." At least as important, though, is the loss of so many of our best and brightest, who now squander the most productive years of their lives in legal drudgery. This disorder goes back at least 2,500 years to Plato, who worried about a noble youth wasting "most of his life in courtrooms defending and accusing." Worse, the fellow is "persuaded to pride himself on this very thing, because he is clever at doing injustice and competent at practicing every dodge, escaping through every loophole, by writhing and twisting and thereby not paying the penalty, and all this for the sake of little and worthless things; ignorant of how much finer and better it is to arrange his life so as to have no need of a dozing judge."

And so I smile when I hear young lawyers talk about how they are working on an interesting case. Knowing they are interesting people, they believe they must be doing interesting work. Unfortunately, their fascinating task more often than not is a tiresome exploration of, say, whether any state court has ever accepted jurisdiction over a matter because of a litigant's presence in a state with the same number of letters. (Don't laugh.)

But absorption in such minutiae is not the disease, merely the symptom of a profession which by smoke and mirrors attempts to maintain its role as a necessary, and highly paid, accessory to our kudzu-like laws and regulations. Think how much brighter the nation's future would be if the sharpest of our young followed more productive pursuits.

It is encouraging we still have five times as many scientists and engineers as lawyers. But that pales next to Japan's engineer-to-lawyer ratio of 115 to one. Even our common-law cousin England has 15 engineers for every barrister.

In my case, after several years of well-paid lawyering, I left private practice while still possessed of some sanity and self-respect—though without any immediate job prospect. It took me nearly a year to land a job in business, but I'm now in my fifth year of productive work. The business world has proved far superior in terms of intellectual excitement, cooperative effort, and the reassuring feeling that one has helped provide valuable goods and services, rather than gumming up the sidewalks of others' lives.

Not that the inefficient chasm currently lying between law and other commercial disciplines couldn't be narrowed. Paralegals and others could be permitted to handle more of the simple, repetitive areas of the law. Advertising and marketing restrictions on legal services could be lifted to promote competition. And law schools could make the J.D. more valuable by incorporating courses in business management and conflict resolution.

At bottom, though, the two most necessary reforms are first, a flat-out reduction in laws, regulations, and litigations, and second, a reduction in the number of men and women schooled in the art of multiplying and obfuscating those same laws, regulations, and litigations.

Jon Olson writes from Mendham, New Jersey.

LAW SCHOOL FOLLIES

Richard Kahlenberg went to Harvard Law filled with excitement, only to be disillusioned, as he writes in *Broken Contract: A Memoir of Harvard Law School:*

> My beloved grandfather had been a leading patent attorney in Chicago. In fourth grade, on career day, I had said I wanted to be a patent attorney. I had no idea what they did, but I knew he made big bucks. As [Professor] Weinreb droned on, I now found patent law to be insufferably boring. Throughout law school, I had become more and more aware that, under the veneer of respectability and prestige, all the law profession allowed was some pretty dreary detail....
>
> Exams were light my last semester.... People all around me uncorked champagne bottles. I didn't celebrate with my fellow law students. I walked outside Langdell, and there were Rebecca and Cindy, waiting for me. In law school, I had become a husband and a father, and those things were much more important to me than being a student, or even a lawyer.

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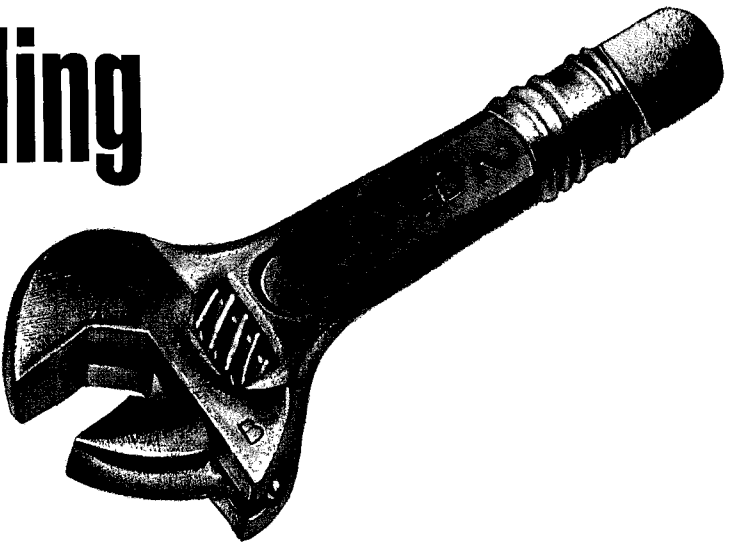
Wrench-wrestling *vs.* *Pencil-pushing*



by Andrew Peyton Thomas

Are there any Americans left who don't mind getting their hands dirty in the course of honest employment? Has this land of pioneers and steelworkers become so effete that we cannot even produce citizens willing to assemble and repair the equipment that makes modern life so convenient?

A recent proposal by President Clinton, tailored to polls and political exigencies, suggests so. His call for a $1,500 tax credit for college tuition reflects how the American dream now includes escaping from a career of manual labor. Some who recalled Clinton's tax policies before his re-election campaign began justifiably cried hypocrisy.

Yet a more substantive objection should be raised, one that undermines the union-made image of Clinton and his party as the loyal advocates of working people. Underlying Clinton's proposal is a subtle form of snobbery toward those men and women who work with their hands, who actually make things or provide menial, essential services in this Information Age. To these millions of Americans who have not gone to college and do not wish to, the plan is discriminatory, and even somewhat insulting.

It is also economically dubious. Contrast this college subsidy proposal, for instance, with a recent *Wall Street Journal* article reporting our current *shortage* of skilled, blue-collar workers. Far from living hand to mouth, such workers are enjoying an economic boom—partly because their potential competitors in these trades have all gone off to college. "A journeyman welder is like a free agent in baseball," said an executive in Wisconsin. These and other skilled manual labor positions, he explained, pay workers $35,000 to $50,000 a year. A good toolmaker often earns $60,000 with overtime.

But remarkably, many young people who used to claim these skilled-labor positions have now been diverted to college, only to graduate to jobs that pay less. Today, while more than half of high school graduates attend college, only 30 percent eventually earn a degree. Lured by an aimless, cafeteria-style curriculum that assures students that all degrees are created equal, many of the students who are graduated walk out with degrees in things like anthropology or fashion design, which serve them poorly in the marketplace.

Community colleges, by contrast, do a better job of relating education to the job market. Their students—roughly a third of them in vocational training programs—account for over half of all higher-education enrollment.

Many jobs that now require a college degree do so only out of professional tradition or expectations, rather than an inherent need for four years or more of higher education. Lawyers are a good example. Most of a lawyer's skills can be obtained from a paralegal school and a good high school forensics class. This would be far more cost-effective than seven years of higher education, simply to do something as straightforward as reading and understanding law cases and contracts, and arguing a client's position in court. Yet in order to keep the pool of lawyers reasonably small, the bar association zealously guards its monopoly by erecting obstacles to admission, including unnecessary educational attainments. Similarly, the education establishment and its friends in the media and government promote the rather self-serving presumption that a college degree is necessary for those entering the top professions.

The disfavor commonly shown toward manual labor and vocational training flows from several sources. One is the urge for self-preservation among professors and university officials, who foster the assumption that a college degree is essential for success. But let us not be misled by statistics about persons with college educations earning more than those without degrees. If the labor market is flooded with college graduates, higher-paying employers will usually select college graduates, who will therefore earn higher pay—not because of any need for their diplomas, but because the degree adds some prestige to the employee at little to no cost to the employer.

Finally, many Americans look down on manual labor and view college education as a means of escaping its toils and class connotations. We send our children off to college so that they can avoid the stigma attached to working with tools instead of words and numbers, and of being servants to those whose jobs demand creativity instead of routine. Yet those who enter these honorable, perennial professions deserve social commendation for doing the tedious things that free up time for more "big picture" activities. These citizens certainly deserve better than to be penalized fiscally for not seeking a college degree, a degree that, for them and for perhaps most, is not worth the pretty parchment on which it is written.

If we really want to improve society, how about a tax cut for lawyers who renounce their bar membership and take up welding?

Andrew Peyton Thomas, an assistant attorney general for Arizona, is the author of Crime and the Sacking of America *and a Bradley Fellow at the Heritage Foundation.*

Illustration by Ralph Butler

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Runaway College Tuition

BY RALPH R. REILAND

A college education "could soon be out of reach to middle-income America," warns Rep. Dick Zimmer (R-NJ). "Unless costs are controlled, by the year 2000 the average price tag for attending a four-year public university will exceed $50,000 and the average four-year cost at a private university will exceed $104,000."

In its admission packet, Dartmouth conveniently refers to the availability of home-equity loans that permit parents "to tap up to 80 percent of the equity in their homes as an educational resource." Indeed, as jumps in tuition outstrip increases in family income, it becomes ever more likely that parents will have to spend home equity to send their children to college. Between 1970 and 1994, the consumer price index increased a little under four times, but the average cost of tuition, room, and board at four-year public colleges went up nearly five times—and private college costs rose almost seven times, from just under $3,000 to over $20,000. (See chart.) By 1994, the average four-year costs at a private college equaled 156 percent of the typical family's annual income.

What is driving these skyrocketing prices? College administrators can't complain of a shortage of income. In fact, their abundant income might be largely to blame. Endowments, private gifts, and government aid to colleges all rose far faster than the inflation rate over the last decade and a half. Instead, the big problem on campus has been uncontrolled spending.

Chief among runaway expenses are administrative costs, which have exploded with the proliferation of non-teaching "academic support professionals"—people like auditors, counselors, affirmative action officers, grant writers, and systems analysts. Between 1975 and 1985, while student enrollment in colleges and universities increased by 10 percent, professional support staffs expanded by more than 60 percent, resulting in additional annual salary costs of close to $4 billion. Administrative costs now consume 45 cents of every instructional dollar, compared with only 27 cents in 1950 and 19 cents in 1930.

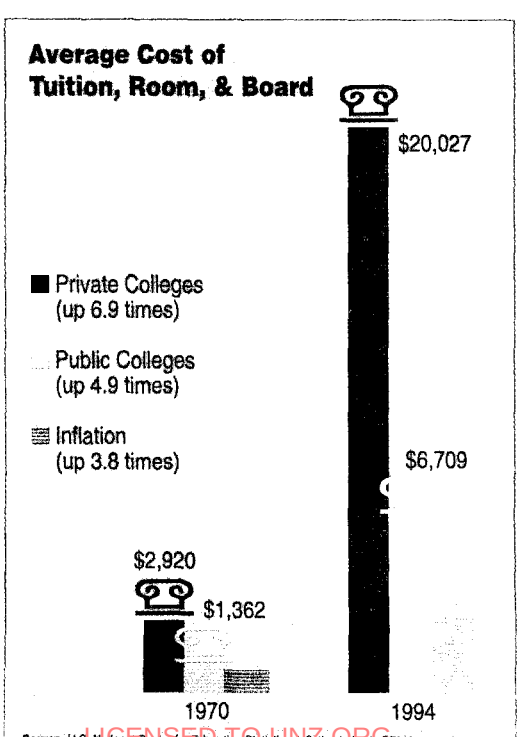
On this front, educators complain of onerous government regulations. "Colleges must comply with a growing number of state and federal laws, ranging from rules on the disposal of hazardous waste to measures meant to assure equal access to higher education for all students," reports the *Chronicle of Higher Education*. Likewise, James Appleberry of the American Association of State Colleges and Universities decries the need to draw up six different reports on minority hiring in six different ways for six different agencies.

These complaints have some merit, but colleges also suffer under the costs of their increasingly padded workstyles. Average salaries for professors at public universities rose by 108 percent between 1980 and 1993, the American Association of University Professors reports, while those at private universities jumped by 134 percent, nearly double the accumulated inflation during the same period. On top of these salary increases, fringe benefits at universities increased by 104 percent between 1983 and 1993, reports Research Associates of Washington, with schools offering unprecedented retirement contributions, bonuses, travel compensation, and sabbaticals.

This rising remuneration does not reflect rising work effort. For example, since 1989 the number of students enrolled in Pennsylvania's public universities has remained constant, the average undergraduate class size has declined—and the average instructional salary has increased by about a third. According to the Higher Education Research Institute, tenured professors in America now spend an average of 10 hours a week in the classroom, for 30 weeks a year, for an average of $60,000 a year—that's $200 per class hour—plus pensions and benefits.

In the business world, higher prices generally correlate with higher quality. Consumers simply won't pay more for a Lexus unless it outperforms a Ford. Yet in education, we're witnessing exactly the opposite, with higher prices buying a dumbed-down curriculum and easier grades. "As college tuition has climbed, grade inflation has risen right along with it, perhaps muting complaints about what it all costs," contends columnist John Leo. "At Harvard in 1992, 91 percent of undergraduate grades were *B*- or higher. In 1993, 83.6 percent of Harvard seniors graduated with honors. Stanford is top heavy with *A*'s and *B*'s too; only about 6 percent of all grades are *C*'s. At Princeton, *A*'s rose from 33 percent of all grades to 40 percent in four years."

Any proposed change in programs or courses, no matter how justified, is likely to spawn a faculty protest. At Columbia, 25 departmental chairmen threatened to quit in the face of proposed budget cuts. At the University of California, the Board of Regents' recommendation to repeal racial quotas in admissions was met with bomb threats. In New Jersey, academics resorted to midnight tire slashing to demonstrate the evils of vouchers.



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Colleges are increasingly assuming the role of Robin Hood, taking money from those who can afford it, both taxpayers and parents, and redistributing it to those who can't. Like monopolies in the commercial world, "private colleges and universities set an unrealistically high list price and then offer varying discounts," explains economist Thomas Sowell. "In academia, this list price is called tuition and the discount is called financial aid." And so, about half of all students at private colleges and universities now receive some form of non-loan aid, averaging $3,000 to $5,000 a year.

"Each year, for 35 years," Sowell explains, the nation's top schools "met to decide how much they would charge, as a net price," to every student who applied. Where the schools' estimates differed on what could be extracted, they were "reconciled in the meetings and the student then received so-called 'financial-aid' offers, which meant that the net cost of going to one college in the cartel would be the same as the net cost of going to another." This was a "price-fixing system that OPEC might envy," the *Wall Street Journal* concluded.

Tens of billions of government dollars slosh through America's ivory towers, and these subsidies rose over 30 percent in real terms between 1980 and 1991. They foster tuition hikes by making it easier for colleges to raise prices, thereby creating demands for still more assistance. "Subsidies have shielded colleges from the normal forces of the marketplace," agrees Hillsdale College president George Roche. And if a college does keep its tuition affordable, Sowell adds, it in effect forfeits millions in federal money that could provide income over and above what students can pay. In short, cash-hungry academics who regularly berate "greedy" businessmen don't just want parents' life savings; they want their tax dollars too, and without the strain of competition other businesses face.

Rather than throwing money at the problem of rising college costs, state legislators are beginning to consider the opposite approach. "The higher education community thinks they're above it all," says Ohio representative Wayne Jones. "They don't like to be told what to do, but if they want us to be their sugar daddy, there are going to be some rules." Already, professors at Ohio's state-subsidized schools must spend 10 percent more time teaching undergraduates than they did in 1990, and the legislature is also considering cuts in program duplication. "There is no need to have 13 Ph.D. programs in history," contends Scott Borgamenke, chief of staff to the Ohio Senate Republican Caucus. "Maybe we're better served to have two in the state, one in the north and one in the south."

Performance-based funding is currently working its way through the legislatures in Connecticut, Arkansas, Kentucky, Texas, Washington, Massachusetts, and several other states. Tennessee already has an accountability system that links 5 percent of the funding of state universities to performance criteria. In Colorado, after a vice chancellor in the state university received a sabbatical to "read Aristotle and Shakespeare and reactivate my sense of scholarship," the state legislature responded by tightening faculty leaves and abolishing sabbaticals for administrators.

"American universities teach what they do for the same reason Polish factories used to turn out pairs of boots with two left feet," writes David Frum, "because an absence of consumer sovereignty enables them to get away with it." But consumer sovereignty could return to higher education. The Heartland Institute recommends a system of college vouchers: "Instead of making direct appropriations to universities, the legislature should distribute vouchers, in an amount equal to the current per-student appropriation." This move would level the playing field between private and public schools by ending public schools' current advantage in public aid. (In Pennsylvania, for instance, private institutions of higher learning educate nearly half of all college students but receive only 12 percent of total state appropriations.) A voucher system would also produce tuition prices that more accurately reflect real costs and efficiencies.

"Competition for students would lead to cost-cutting and lower tuitions, and also to innovations and specialization that bring down the cost of a college education," the Institute adds. "Appropriations to smaller, less prestigious institutions would increase," while falling tuition costs would "improve the access of the poor," for whom the professoriate claims such compassion.

Investors Business Daily recently summarized the growing consensus about higher education in the United States: "It has been said that the only place where socialism lives is in academia. No doubt that refers to the ideology being taught, but it could also refer to how universities are run and financed. Indeed, most colleges and universities are quasi-socialist institutions, which helps to explain the soaring costs of higher education and why it delivers less and less."

Quasi-capitalism may be coming to America's campuses in response. Bottom-line analysis, performance standards, merit pay, downsizing, better teaching, a more sensible curriculum, and greater overall accountability will be demanded by parents familiar with increased competitiveness in their own work lives—and by politicians looking at empty public coffers.

Rather than address waste in education, however, President Clinton wants to raise subsidies higher still. In a recent speech at Princeton, he unveiled a hastily assembled $25 billion "America's Hope Scholarships Tax Cut." This ploy was too much for the *Washington Post*, which retorted, "Would the real beneficiaries be the students, or would schools simply be freer to raise their fees?"

"Education at the typical community college will now be free," promised the President. But it can't be "free," of course, unless teachers, administrators, contractors, janitors, and secretaries all agree to work for no pay. It will be anything but "free" to those forced to pick up increased costs through higher taxes. "This is a jobs program for the political-correctness industry," opined the *Wall Street Journal*. "Mr. Clinton could just as well cut out the middle man and send the money directly to his friends in the liberal academic community."

And since the Clinton proposal only keeps the money flowing if students maintain a *B* average, a professor who upholds academic standards with strict grading will not only run the risk of empty classes, but of being scolded by financial aid administrators as well. In the 1960s, professors began passing out easy grades to keep students out of Vietnam. Under the Clinton proposal, an easy *B* will keep the federal gravy train running on track.

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Race and University Admissions

by Bob Zelnick

It is April 1995 in Ithaca, New York. The computer has just printed out the list of 224 names accepted for admission to the Cornell University School of Industrial and Labor Relations for the fall semester, and Richard Wagner, the dean of admissions, is looking it over. He is a tall, distinguished man with white hair, a Vermont Yankee who thinks his efforts to place blacks, Hispanics, and Mexicans into the I&LR school may one day get him into heaven. But now as he stares at a copy of this list, his eyes show concern, perhaps a little sadness. "In terms of affirmative action, this is going to be a bad year," he warns. "We can offer only a few under EOP [the Equal Opportunity Program]. And there is intense competition for the ones that don't need EOP to get in."

Wagner hands the list to a visitor and begins to explain the letters under the heading "Ethnicity." *A* is American Indian. *B* is black. *C* is Hispanic, that is, any Central or South American who is not of Mexican ancestry or a Puerto Rican national. *D* is Asian—that counts as a minority but not an "under-represented" minority. *E* is Puerto Rican. *F* is Caucasian. *G* is Mexican-American. *J* is foreign. And *N* is not reported—applicants are not required to disclose their ethnicity, though Wagner is not above making an educated guess.

About three-quarters of the way across the page is a column marked "Academic Index." Wagner explains that it is derived by taking the average of an applicant's highest math and verbal SAT scores, the average of his three highest SAT achievement test scores, and his percentile class rank. Each of those three figures—combined math and verbal SAT, achievement SAT, class rank—is then translated into points, with 20 points reflecting the low end of the spectrum and 80 points the high end. The three scores are then added together to produce the "Academic Index." The lowest possible AI is 60, the highest, 240. Among those accepted for admission the highest score was 228, the lowest, 161.

That score, 161, could translate into 440 on the verbal SAT, 580 on the math, 400 to 480 on the achievement tests, and a 3.3 high school GPA, putting an applicant in the top 25-30 percent of his class. "I'll let you in on a little secret," Wagner continues. "This year the eight Ivy League presidents decided to make 161 the cut-off for athletes—anyone lower than that can only be admitted to an Ivy League school by the vote of a special review committee. So we decided to make it our affirmative action cut-off as well."

Wagner begins reviewing the list. He stops at a Jewish name in the top cluster. "This young man is from a high school in Long Island. Three of the top five in his graduating class applied to the I&LR school."

Did the other two get in?

"No. We can't have that kind of concentration; it has nothing to do with affirmative action."

Would you say that if they were "under-represented" minorities?

"I'll cross that bridge when I come to it. Right now I have trouble finding three from the same city."

The eighth name on the list has a Spanish surname. "This is my pride and joy," says Wagner. "Mexican. Her folks are migrant laborers from California. And look at that Academic Index, 218! Can you imagine that! She's also been accepted at Stanford. I'm holding my breath."

That is a big problem for Cornell and many other schools. The top under-represented minority high school graduates get into Harvard, Yale, Princeton, Stanford, and Duke on their own, just like any outstanding student. Then these schools move down a rung, accepting minority students who, in most cases, would not make the school if they were white. That, in a nutshell, is how affirmative action in the service of university "diversity" works. But it leaves top-flight institutions like the I&LR school with many minority students who, were they white or Asian, would be heading for Boston University, Syracuse, or Ohio State—fine schools all, but not the nation's most selective.

The migrant workers' daughter is not counted as an Equal Opportunity Program admission, since she was accepted strictly on merit.

Four places below her on Wagner's list is another Mexican-American girl about whom he is nearly as excited, and 18 places further down, an Hispanic boy; both are clearly merit admissions. Then the pickings become slim. The first black, a young woman, is the 124th name to appear on the list, but still with a solid academic index of 194. Below her name, there is only an occasional under-represented minority until near the bottom of the fourth and final page. Of the bottom 13 names, one is Caucasian and one Asian. The rest are EOP admissions.

But of the 224 names on the list, only ten are black—half the 1994 total. The reason stems from a math course that was added to the I&LR curriculum at the insistence of the faculty, who judged that pre-calculus is a prerequisite for the sort of advanced statistics courses now required in the fields of personnel administration and labor economics. But when the 1994 freshmen took the "pre-cal" course, more than half of those admitted under I&LR's affirmative action program received grades no higher than D, and more than a third flunked outright. So the faculty snatched at least part of Wagner's discretionary authority from him and imposed a rule that no student would be accepted who failed to score at least 500 on the math portion of the SAT.

"That devastated our affirmative action program," says Wagner, who calls it "an example of a self-perpetuating white male culture. And," he sighs, "it's so unnecessary."

He has more paper to show, a list of the 33 EOP students selected for the classes of '92 through '98. So far, two have been dismissed for academic reasons, three others have dropped out for reasons that may or may not have anything to do with academics. "This year our graduation rate will be 100 percent. 100

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percent! And look at this." He points to the name of a black member of the Class of '95. SATs: 330 verbal, 390 math. "Consider what this kid's life would be like without EOP and what it will be like because we gave her a chance. Now, is there anything else you want to know?"

Yes, what about those two Jewish kids from Long Island who didn't make the cut?

"Ah, they'll be fine."

Those two kids were in good company. The 12-page list of all applicant dispositions shows many Caucasians who had been rejected with SAT scores above 1,200, even 1,300, while the minority applicants with much lower scores were being accepted or placed on the waiting list.

Professor John Bishop was the leading faculty advocate for requiring a minimum score on the math SATs, which caused the I&LR school to wind up with a numerically small group of minority students compared to recent years, but a group that also could be the most academically competitive in the school's history.

Bishop's position is consistent with his long-held view as a labor economist that it is wrong and self-defeating to make it difficult for employers to test the verbal and math reasoning abilities of potential employees. In 1991, he told the House Labor Committee that "employers need to be told by people in authority that they are acting in the national interest when they seek out and reward those who have higher level academic skills," because in the long run this will raise the nation's standard of living.

Affirmative action admissions procedures produce black freshmen with decidedly lower combined SATs than white freshmen, even at those universities that attract by far the most qualified applicants of both races. The following figures are for 1992:

Institution	Gap Between Black and White SATs
Harvard	95
Princeton	150
Duke	184
Dartmouth	218
Columbia	82
Brown	150
Rice	271
Pennsylvania	150
Cornell	162
Stanford	171
Johns Hopkins	155

Many academicians claim that the tendency of prestigious institutions to enroll blacks who lack top academic credentials produces a "mismatch" of students and schools that cascades all the way down the academic ladder, with black students forced to struggle at schools a notch or two above where their talents should have landed them. The black who is a marginal student at Stanford, Rice, or Dartmouth, it is argued, could be a substantial academic presence at, say, Cal Santa Barbara, Texas A&M, or Boston College, and so on down the line. Sadly, this mismatching can easily lead blacks and whites at all levels to assume blacks are academically inferior, when in fact mismatched white students would also fare badly. Since students admitted under affirmative action would almost certainly have succeeded at more appropriate schools, they suffer a terrible blow due to some schools' misplaced sense of social responsibility.

While many prestigious universities have continued aggressive affirmative action admissions programs, others have leveled off or cut back. The result appears to be a declining enrollment of blacks, at least at many of the nation's premier schools, but with those blacks who do attend doing reasonably well in comparison to whites.

A majority of these schools now have around 90 percent of their black students graduating within six years. Producing a student body in which all races succeed academically at roughly the same rate is an excellent reason for colleges and universities to temper their numbers game.

ABC News correspondent Bob Zelnick is the author of Backfire: A Reporter's Look at Affirmative Action, *from which this article is adapted.*

Diminished Doctors

On the 1988 National Board exams for doctors, pass rates were 88 percent for whites, 84 for Asians, 66 for Hispanics, and 49 for blacks, according to the September 7, 1994 *Journal of the American Medical Association.* The mean score for black females was 369; for black males, 392; for white females, 467; and for white males, 499.

Admissions for medical school are, of course, highly competitive. But affirmative action is the operative national admissions policy. The motto of medical schools these days is "3,000 by 2000": 3,000 new minority medical school students by the year 2000. As it is applied, the policy routinely denies admission to more qualified whites and Asians while providing admission to less qualified blacks and Hispanics. The evidence is overwhelming that this gap carries over into performance in medical school and on the qualifying exam to become a doctor. As early as 1976, Prof. Bernard Davis of Harvard Medical School published a critique of Harvard's practices in the *New England Journal of Medicine* that chronicled the erosion of standards after Harvard decided to reserve 20 percent of each medical school class for minorities. First, required science courses were dropped when it became clear minorities fared poorly in them. Next, a pass-fail grading system replaced traditional letter grades. Then simply passing the national medical boards was determined to be adequate. When minorities failed their boards in disproportionate numbers, they were given five opportunities to pass, and when this proved insufficient, the provision was waived altogether.

The conclusion is inescapable: because of race preferences, this country is producing doctors who are substantially less qualified than those who would be starting the practice of medicine if race preferences were abandoned. The same society that keeps potentially useful drugs off the market until they are tested for a near-eternity, that bans carcinogens that must be consumed by the gallon to produce harm—this society deliberately graduates doctors who are less qualified to treat the sick than would be the case if admissions to medical school were based purely on ability and not on race.

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Separate & Unequal

Segregation on Campus

BY KENNETH LEE

"We're facing a historical struggle today.... This is an issue of justice," thundered the Rev. Al Sharpton. "We've faced 400 years of racism and barbarism!" A crowd of 500 roared approval and burst into chants of "No Justice, No Peace!"

Sharpton makes a living by delivering jeremiads against racism and oppression. Yet this rally was unusual. It took place not in Bensonhurst or Harlem, but at Cornell University, which prides itself on its racial sensitivity.

Sharpton's speech provided the climax to a month of rallies, hunger strikes, and protests at this Ivy League school. The maelstrom started when school administrators decided to prohibit freshmen from living in the school's three ethnic dormitories: the predominantly black Ujaama; the Latino Living Center; and Akwe:Kon, an American Indian house. Many minority students opposed this rule, claiming that minority freshmen would lose their racial identities if they could not reside in these ethnic dorms. As one black student put it, "I don't want to be white."

It's difficult not to sympathize with the minority students. College life can be unsettling, and associating with similar people can provide security at a predominantly white university. Many minority students say that residing in an ethnic dormitory is like living with a "family."

Yet racial separatism on campus is rife with ironies. The American university is supposed to be a place where individuals from diverse backgrounds can engage in intellectual pursuits free from "real world" problems of race. But in fact, race is paramount on many college campuses, and tensions run high even—or especially—at elite Northern schools where students and faculty are supposedly more open-minded. Justin Samuels, a black student from Alabama, said, "I come from the South, and the race situation is far from perfect there, but it's not [as bad as] here" at Cornell.

The same universities that enact affirmative action programs to foster diversity and mutual understanding also encourage self-segregation along ethnic lines. Their motivations arise partly in response to intimidation, and partly from well-intentioned but misguided liberal paternalism.

Cornell is a particularly telling example. At times, the school has facilitated racial separatism under pressure from threats and building sit-ins. Ujamaa, for example, was established in the wake of the infamous 1969 building takeover by armed black students. (Notable professors Walter Berns, Thomas Sowell, and Allan Bloom all left Cornell soon after this incident. Black Republican presidential candidate-to-be Alan Keyes, then an undergraduate, opposed the building takeover and left after being threatened by fellow students.) In 1994, Cornell erected the Latino Living Center after protesters stormed the main administration building, injuring several campus police officers. Now in 1996, after students rallied with Sharpton, Cornell has backed off from its plan to disallow freshmen in the ethnic dorms.

But although protests have figured in the establishment of ethnic dormitories, Cornell's liberal paternalism has played a larger role in encouraging ethnic segregation. Ethnic theme houses received the administration's full support until the *New York Times*' reporting embarrassed the school. And these dorms represent only a fraction of the campus's institutional separatism. From the moment minority students are accepted at Cornell, the school isolates them and treats them like delicate commodities. Minority engineering students, for example, have separate study lounges. A Minority Affairs Office exclusively serves minority students. Ethnic studies depart-

Peter Hoegel, Jr./Courtesy of Cornell Daily Sun

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ments segregate the students academically. The university even publishes a separate yearbook for graduating minority students.

Soft-hearted liberal paternalism explains some of these actions. Administrators truly want to make the school more hospitable to minority students, and many also see racial consciousness as the healthy expression of a multicultural community. But a more insidious rationale also exists. Minority students drop out at higher rates than whites, and critics have attributed this to affirmative action programs that admit underqualified students to challenging schools where they are likely to fail. (See "Race and University Admissions," page 61.) So by paying special attention to minority students, universities hope to retain more of them and quell criticisms of affirmative action. A particularly egregious example is Cornell's pre-freshman summer program: All accepted "underrepresented minority" students attend classes at Cornell the summer before their freshmen year—all expenses paid. This summer school gives minority students an edge over their peers in terms of experience and course credits, increasing their retention rates. College administrators vehemently deny this motivation, but many white students are skeptical and resent such preferential treatment.

These separate-but-equal policies may suit Cornell's purposes, but they have several negative effects on the student body. First, they demean minority students and reinforce racial stereotypes. Secondly, by isolating minority students they foster racial consciousness and a victimization mentality, encouraging minority students to view everything through the lens of ethnicity and blame white racism for all ills. Those minority students who come to Cornell uninitiated to racial group-think are introduced to it by the school itself.

Take Myisha Frazier for example, a freshman and a black resident of Ujaama from a predominantly white high school. (According to an internal Cornell document, most minority students come from predominantly white suburbs, not urban ghettoes.) She says that students of different races got along reasonably well at her high school: black and white students "ate together at the [same] lunch tables."

Frazier admits she was surprised at first by the level of separatism at Cornell. Why, then, did she decide to live in Ujamaa in her freshman year? In the spring of 1995, after she was accepted, she visited the campus during "Minority Hosting Week" and stayed at Ujamaa. (Non-minority students visit the campus during the "regular" hosting week and stay in a traditional dormitory.) The racial segregation that Frazier experienced even before matriculating set the tone for her college career, if not for the rest of her life.

Is it any wonder that most white students graduate having had little contact with minority students and that they are genuinely perplexed by the separatism on campus that seems at odds with the original goals of the civil rights movement? White students also tend to resent the double-standards tolerated for minority students—Cornell, for example, paid money to bring notorious anti-Semitic, anti-white speakers like Leonard Jeffries, Sister Souljah, and Conrad Muhammad. Minority students, in turn, perceive this resentment as proof of white racism on campus. A vicious cycle begins, and the campus becomes polarized.

Cornell now has an even bigger problem: the University's ethnic dorms face an investigation by the U.S. Department of Education for possible violation of the 1964 Civil Rights Act. The Department of Education has initiated the investigation at the prodding of Michael Meyers, executive director of the New York Civil Rights Coalition.

Meyers, who became the youngest assistant director of the NAACP in 1975, is one of the few remaining black civil rights leaders who opposes racial separatism and black nationalism. He has called on Cornell President Hunter Rawlings to dismantle the ethnic program houses. "By treating minority students as surrogates for their communities rather than as individuals, ethnic dorms foster racial group thinking and defeat a university's mission to broaden all students' horizon," says Meyers. He also notes that Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 bars recipients of federal money from even *indirectly* implementing policies that subject any person to exclusion or discrimination by race or ethnicity.

Cornell denies that its ethnic program houses violate any law. "Cornell neither assigns nor prevents anyone from living in [the program houses] because of race or ethnicity," says Henrik Dullea, the vice president of university relations. "All of us need to work to improve the level of [racial] interaction at Cornell, but this is separate from a legal question."

Meyers, however, scoffs at Cornell's defense, which he calls a "cynical evasion of civil rights law." "If Cornell were a Southern university standing behind white students who chose to live in segregated dorms, the feds would demand immediate desegregation," he argues.

After all, if personal interaction is the key to decreasing ignorance and ameliorating racial tension, Cornell has pursued a bankrupt policy. Unfortunately, many minority students don't see such failed policies as the cause of racial tension. Cornell teaches them instead to attribute the tension to white racism. Myisha Frazier, the freshman who went from a racially integrated high school to Ujamaa house at Cornell, now comments, "Cornell is a microcosm of the real world. We live in a racist society, and so there'll be racists at Cornell."

Other minority students are more blunt in claiming victimhood. At the Sharpton rally, students repeatedly denounced "white supremacy" on campus without citing any specific examples. One student speaker shouted, "Ujamaa is not a program house. It is a de-programming house that fights Eurocentric ideology by instilling Afrocentric ideas and trains us for the war of liberation of our people.... [Cornell] President Rawlings is trying to deny our constitutional, democratic right to freely associate with each other."

This student apparently did not realize the irony of his statement: the Constitution, and democracy as we know it, originate from a distinctly Western, "Eurocentric" tradition. The student's ignorance, of course, is not surprising, given that liberal arts students must take a class in multiculturalism—but not in Western civilization—to graduate from Cornell.

If Cornell was the only school plagued by self-segregation, there would be little to worry about. Unfortunately, racial separatism is the rule, not the exception, at most colleges. And that is something to worry about.

Kenneth Lee is an undergraduate student at Cornell University.

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WILL THE CHINESE SAVE L.A.?

©Tony Stone Images/Deborah Davis

BY JOEL KOTKIN

Over a tuna sandwich at Musso Franks on Hollywood boulevard, Vincent Diau makes an astonishing admission: he likes the American legal system. It compares well to all the others he's seen throughout the Pacific Basin. "Everyone complains about lawyers and the system here...and it has its problems," admits Diau, who studied law at Tulane University. "But this is the society I want to live in because it's based on competition and individual rights."

An editor of the *Chinese Daily News* in Southern California for a decade, Diau has even attempted to explain the U.S. legal system to his fellow Chinese in a book with a title that roughly translates, "Haunted by Lawsuits." "Malaysia or Thailand is not really open to Chinese," Diau explains as he drains an iced tea. "Chinese can't get into the legal or political system there. You're always the outsider, no matter how rich you are. Here, it's pretty open and it's pretty easy to upgrade into the mainstream. In Malaysia or Thailand you are an economic animal."

This crucial difference between the conditions faced by Chinese diaspora living here and those living elsewhere has enormous, largely positive implications for American society—particularly its hard-pressed urban areas. At a rate that surpasses Latino and even European immigrants, Chinese and other Asians are integrating rapidly into the mainstream of American life. Three-quarters of all post-1970s Asian immigrants to California, for example, have become citizens, compared to one-quarter of Latinos and roughly half of European newcomers.

Like most L.A. Chinese, Diau, a 42-year-old engaged in international business, and his schoolteacher wife, Alice, confirmed their pro-American sentiments in 1992 by becoming American citizens. They live in a comfortable house in Cerritos—a highly diverse, heavily Asian community in southern Los Angeles County—with their two young children, both native-born U.S. citizens. "We are not like the old-style Chinese who came here a hundred years ago," Diau insists. "They came to make money and send it all to China. Now people like us stay here for the good dream and to educate our kids. It's where we want to stay."

Decisions by Chinese to stay and integrate into California life reflect something of a historical departure, both in the Golden State and throughout the diaspora. For much of their early history, Californians directed their greatest racist ire not at blacks or Mexicans but against Asians, beginning with the Chinese. In 1854, the legal system now held up as a model by Diau was being used to crush the growing Chinese community. They were forbidden to testify against whites and faced a special miners tax—which soon became the source for roughly one-quarter of California's state revenues. When an attempt to ban immigration of Chinese was struck down as unconstitutional, a series of pogroms descended on the vulnerable community. Ultimately, under pressure from California politicians, Congress banned all further Chinese immigration in 1882.

Not surprisingly, the California Chinese adopted many of the attitudes later remarked upon in the diaspora countries of

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southeast Asia. They learned to be discreet, even obsequious, and always to be careful not to show off their wealth. "My father was very cautious," recalls one elderly San Francisco Chinese merchant, David Cheng, whose father delivered parcels between the state's far-flung Chinese settlements: "He never wore good clothing" or let it be known "that he was carrying thousands of dollars concealed among his rags."

Even in the face of such prejudice, Chinese economic influence in California continued to grow through the late nineteenth century. Chinese dominated the fisheries from Monterey to San Diego and became entrenched in the state's burgeoning agricultural sector. But one source of profit for a few—prostitution and opium smuggling—brought the Chinese community into increasing disrepute.

In cities as diverse as San Francisco, San Jose, Houston, and New York, Chinese entrepreneurs have injected new life into metropolitan regions.

In October 1871, an L.A. policeman got caught between two sets of Tong street fighters in the then-fledgling city's Chinatown section. When the officer was shot, pent-up anti-Chinese sentiment boiled over and a mob of over 1,000 Anglos rushed into Chinatown. As the *San Francisco Bulletin* reported, "Trembling, moaning, wounded Chinese were hauled from their hiding places; ropes quickly encircled their necks; they were dragged to the nearest improvised gallows.... Looting every nook, corner, chest, trunk, and drawer in Chinatown, the mob even robbed the victims it executed." By the time the riots ebbed, 19 Chinese were dead and the community was shattered beyond recognition. Recompense was minimal. Only six Anglo lawbreakers were ever brought to justice, and they served brief prison terms.

More than a century later, only a short walk from the site of that horrific riot, Charlie Woo confronted another ugly scene: a run-down warehouse district east of downtown's high-rises. The only residents seemed to be drunks and drug addicts from the nearby skid row. "No one wanted to be here," he recalls. "It was totally dead." Surveying the kind of urban disrepair that has driven many Anglos out of downtown to the sterile distant suburbs and out-of-state Valhallas, Woo spotted opportunity.

The year was 1982. Woo had come to Southern California from Hong Kong in 1979 with plans to become a physicist. But shortly before he finished his Ph.D., Woo's family asked him to help set up their business importing toys from Hong Kong. In the abandoned warehouse district, he saw a perfect, low-cost locale for the new family enterprise.

Using his family's Hong Kong connections, Woo procured large volumes of toys. Just as Jewish merchants learned how to compete against the old Yankee traders in cities across the country, Charlie Woo found ways to beat L.A.'s older, largely Jewish toy wholesalers. "They were mostly older guys thinking about profit margins, but when I came in immigrants were hungrier. They said, 'I don't need 50 to 100 percent margins—if I could do more volume, I could make it on 15 to 25 percent.'"

Although greater L.A.'s Chinese population was exploding from less than 100,000 in 1970 to nearly half a million in 1990, Woo did not think it sensible to build an ethnically exclusive business district in the heart of the nation's most racially diverse city. Instead, he invited entrepreneurs from Mexico, Korea, Vietnam, and the Middle East into the district to complement the Chinese. Customers proved to be similarly varied, including large numbers of buyers from as far away as North Carolina and Argentina.

The district's downtown location may have been a turn-off for many Anglo Angelenos, but for Woo's fellow entrepreneurs and customers it proved the ideal spot. "There's an advantage to being here," he says. "People from Mexico...if you say we're in downtown L.A....are comfortable. The same is true for people from China or Taiwan. All you say is we're near Chinatown or Monterey Park."

More than 500 toy distributors are now located in the area known as "Toytown." A multitude of shoppers come not only for bargains, but for the design skills, packaging, and intelligence about toy trends that now resides among Toytown entrepreneurs. Through his insight and effort, Woo has resuscitated the once-dying district, which now employs some 6,000 workers and has revenues estimated as high as $1 billion.

What Chinese like Woo bring to cities like Los Angeles is the equivalent of building a pipeline to the world's dominant business diaspora. In Orange County, Chinese immigrants (including natives of China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Vietnam) account for almost one-third of the 25 leading minority-owned businesses. In cities as diverse as San Francisco, San Jose, Houston, and New York, Chinese entrepreneurs have injected new life into metropolitan regions. They are particularly predominant in such high-tech areas as San Jose and Orange County, Similarly, Chinese have become increasingly critical players in the transformation of Houston from a one-dimensional energy town into a true cosmpolitan trading center. Chinese have also resuscitated declining New York neighborhoods such as Sunset Park in Brooklyn and Flushing in Queens. As regional economist George Sternlieb once noted: "There's nothing wrong with New York that a million Chinese couldn't cure."

Ultimately, the critical issue facing increasingly Chinese-dependent communities may be whether the newcomers are simply sojourning or settling to stay. In Los Angeles we may be witnessing a hopeful answer to this question. After the 1992 riots, the 1994 earthquake, and the devastating Southern California recession of the early 1990s, many outside sources of investment deserted the city. Japanese, British, and Canadian investors, as well as eastern Americans, simply gave up on the region, particularly its urban core. People also headed out of town, particularly Anglos and blacks. Between 1990 and 1994, a net exodus of nearly 700,000 native-born Angelenos left the area.

Since then, however, California has gained back all the jobs lost in the recession and then some. Even Los Angeles County, the epicenter of the downturn, is experiencing rates of annual job growth 50 percent higher than the national average.

Yet the legacy of negativity has left Los Angeles with a profound loss of business confidence and continued disinvestment from

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its native-born business community. Amidst this depressing scene, one group has stood out in perceiving opportunity—the Chinese.

Seeking safe havens from unstable conditions in Southeast Asia, Taiwan, and Hong Kong, overseas Chinese have moved aggressively into the real estate market, often capturing properties being unloaded by hapless Japanese investors. Today, most of L.A.'s top hotels are Chinese owned, including the Universal-Hilton, the Beverly Wilshire, the L.A. Airport Hilton, the Westin Bonaventure and, most recently, the grande dame of downtown, the Los Angeles Biltmore. With office space in Los Angeles going for roughly one-tenth its equivalent price in Hong Kong, Chinese investors have also been gobbling up prime office towers from downtown to Santa Monica.

Equally important have been the untold hundreds of smaller deals made by individual families, particularly in heavily Chinese San Gabriel Valley just east of Los Angeles—many of those ventures financed by the region's over 30 Chinese-owned banks. New Chinese settlers have been rapidly acquiring residential real estate; Chinese-surnamed people (only 2.7 percent of Los Angeles county's residents) have accounted for nearly one in five homebuyers in recent years. Similarly, Chinese diaspora money has been pouring into New York's real estate market, buying into such deals as Donald Trump's Riverside South development, the Hotel Millennium in lower Manhattan, and the Worldwide Plaza condominiums.

This investment, whether in downtown L.A. or New York's hard-pressed Wall Street district, might be dismissed by some as merely bottom fishing. But local Chinese businessmen like Charlie Woo see not only business opportunity but a chance to build what has long eluded them—a permanent home for their businesses and families.

As they settle in Los Angeles and its suburbs, the Chinese bring with them not only capital, but a kind of stick-to-it-iveness rarely found among the Anglo establishment. On the second day of the Los Angeles riots, Wes Ru opened the doors early as usual at Western Badge and Trophy in the Pico-Union section of the city. At that point, the rioting had not passed north of Santa Monica Freeway, and Ru's workers, mostly from surrounding working-class neighborhoods and the eastside, arrived punctually.

But by 11:00 that morning, the madness was beginning to surge inexorably northwards and towards Pico-Union. With the bus lines cut off in several places, Ru began shuttling his workers by car out of the district. Then he returned to the factory with a handful of supervisors, ready for the worst. "We stood by and watched the street fill with people," the Taiwan-born Ru recalls. "It was filled with people rioting and looting. But we stood our ground."

Four years later Ru is still standing his ground. Recovering first from the riots and then a debilitating recession, Ru's Western Badge and Trophy has spawned a series of related businesses including the largest credit card manufacturing business on the West Coast. The dying trophy company he bought in 1985 with $50,000 borrowed from relatives has now blossomed into a small industrial powerhouse with 500 employees and clients who include Price Club, Coldwell Banker, and Disney.

Along the way, Ru figures that he has helped turn at least 100 people from a possible life of crime and drugs. But he's the last one to say he's staying in L.A. for purely philanthropic reasons. "Why do you stay? Because of relationships and because we have very industrious people," he explains. "This is a good place to do business," says Ru, who expects sales this year to approach $40 million. "I have a source of very good labor, and I'm close to the freeways. There are opportunities all over."

Entrepreneurs like Wesley Ru find other compelling reasons to stay in L.A. He has a son from his former marriage to a Mexican American. In an increasingly Latinized city with a racial intermarriage rate five times the national average (20 percent among Generation Xers) even many Chinese are becoming mestizo. "I have to find a future for my son," Ru jokes. "I mean, what do you do with a Mexican Chinese? If I don't watch it, he'll end up as a car thief who can't drive."

Beyond his politically incorrect humor, Wes Ru has undergone the kind of cultural "transformation" increasingly common among America's Chinese choosing not to stay aloof from the people he's settled among. In cities like Los Angeles, Ru says, there is no way to keep that distance and thrive. "People look at me strangely about wanting to stay here in L.A.," Ru says in his modest back offices along Washington Boulevard. "But most of the people I have here are decent people, very hard-working. They are part of my family. They now have jobs and health insurance—they don't join gangs. If everyone else can see the potential I see, we can build a new society here."

This growing interest among Chinese to build a "new society" contradicts the notion, popular among Asia-American academics, activists, and media types, that they are actually part of the masses of disenfranchised "people of color." To professional social service activists like Stewart Kwoh of the Asia Pacific Legal Center of Southern California, nothing is more distasteful than being "a model minority." This approach receives much tax-payer support through the work of radical academics like UCLA's Paul Ong, for example, who points to higher rates of poverty among Asians, particularly newcomers, as proof that they are as much victims of pervasive racist discrimination as black and other minorities. What Ong ignores is that Asian incomes and educational levels rise rapidly and exceed the general norm within a decade. Native-born Chinese outperform the Anglo population by wide margins both in terms of income and education.

Chinese Americans are following well-established immigrant patterns as they blend into the culture. Like most other heavily immigrant populations, nearly four-fifths of Chinese Californians approve of having English as the state's official language—even though 56 percent speak their native language at home.

This willingness to accept American norms is reflected by daily life at the Diau home in middle-class Cerritos. Many friends and associates are Anglos, and Diau's sister Joann is married to a Japanese Nisei. The kids, Darren and Kevin, are, well, American kids—English-speaking youngsters far more familiar with the Fourth of July than traditional Chinese holidays.

Even as he sends his oldest son off to Chinese school after kindergarten, Vincent Diau remains very much committed to marrying his Chinese heritage to a personal American dream. After generations of sojourning across the vast East Asian basin, the Chinese of America are discovering something more than a mere refuge or opportunity to make a buck. Many have found, at last, a home.

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Asia's Bamboo Network

by

Murray Weidenbaum

and

Samuel Hughes

Ethnic Chinese family businesses based off the mainland of China are the driving force in a new wave of Asian trade, manufacturing, and investment. Quickly becoming a major global power, these overseas Chinese entrepreneurs are weaving a "bamboo network" of complementary business relationships throughout Southeast Asia, tying entrepreneurs, business executives, traders, and financiers together across national boundaries. The private business sector of nearly every Southeast Asian country is dominated by companies owned by overseas Chinese.

Typically, the founders of these businesses possessed little wealth. They built their firms from scratch—working, saving, and reinvesting at prodigious rates. One former student told us of his grandfather who migrated from China to the United States. He took a job in a traditional hand laundry and, after many years of ironing garments, managed to save a very large sum from his modest earnings. He then moved to Hong Kong and invested 50,000 Hong Kong dollars in the rice business, a gutsy move that led to a family fortune now diversified across Southeast Asia.

Today, many small family firms have grown into enormous conglomerates, each of which includes dozens of companies. The total assets of the 500 largest public companies in Asia controlled by overseas Chinese exceed $500 billion. And that excludes the same families' many privately owned enterprises. In Indonesia, for example, Liem Sioe Liong's Salim Group alone is estimated to account for 5 percent of the country's gross domestic product. In Thailand, ethnic Chinese control the four largest private banks, including Bangkok Bank, the region's largest and a key lender to the overseas Chinese community.

Not all of this wealth stays within the home country. Ethnic Chinese are the largest cross-border investors in Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, Hong Kong, the Philippines, and Vietnam. In recent years, much of this investment capital has been flowing into the Chinese mainland. Since Deng Xiaoping launched his economic open-door policy in 1978, overseas Chinese have invested more than $50 billion in their motherland, roughly 80 percent of all foreign investment there. To date, members of the bamboo network have formed over 100,000 joint ventures in China.

The tendency of Chinese merchants to establish themselves away from their home country goes back centuries. Much as Americans traditionally migrated to the West, the Chinese moved south into Malaysia, Thailand, and Indonesia. Yet they have remained Chinese in a deep sense. The Confucian tradition is remarkably persistent; it inculcates loyalty to a hierarchical structure of authority, a code of defined conduct between children and adults, and trust among friends. The closely related virtues of pride in work and disdain for conspicuous consumption are especially beneficial to rapid economic growth.

Wary of government, the expatriate Chinese have found that kinship, dialect, or common origin—in a clan, a village, or even a county—provide a basis for mutual trust in business transactions, even ones conducted at great distances. When Taiwan had strict exchange controls, for example, someone in the network would deposit a large sum with a gold shop in Taipei and have a relative withdraw the equivalent from an affiliated gold dealer in Hong Kong.

Shying from publicity, most overseas Chinese take a low profile in the commercial world. Few if any widely known consumer products have a Chinese brand name. Members of the bamboo network mainly make components. They manufacture for others, doing sub-assembly work, wholesaling, financing, sourcing, and providing transportation. Centralized family control and informal transactions minimize company bureaucracy. Key information is obtained in conversation and retained in the heads of the senior managers. In contrast to the typical Western business's many studies and memoranda, the economies of time and effort achieved by the bamboo network are impressive. Money is borrowed from friends on trust. Transactions of great size are often dealt with by common understanding and a note jotted in a diary.

The central institution of these enterprises is the family. Chinese firms are almost always family firms. As the saying goes, "you can only trust close relatives." We came across two cases where the retiring heads of Chinese businesses summoned their eldest sons home to take over. Coincidentally, in both cases, number-one son was a neurosurgeon with a successful U.S. practice. Both dutifully returned to the family business, abandoning medical practice.

Because most overseas Chinese businesses are privately held, little is known about their operations. Nevertheless, some of the larger overseas Chinese firms are publicly held, enabling us to examine them. One classic example is the Formosa Plastics Group, the business empire of Wang Yung-ching, which enjoyed a market capitalization estimated at over $11 billion in 1994. Wang's holdings are centered on the Taiwan-based Formosa Plastics Corporation. Often called "Y.C.", Wang has ten children, each an executive in the family business. His brother, Y.T. Wang, is president of Formosa Chemicals and Fibre, which he runs with Y.C.'s son William. Y.C.'s daughter Cher Wang is president of Everex Systems, a computer manufacturer in California. Another son, Winston Wang, is senior vice president of Nan Ya Plastics. Daughter Charlene Wang and her husband run First International Computer, the world's largest manufacturer of the "motherboards " used to make personal computers.

When starting new businesses, the overseas Chinese are frequently assisted by their compatriots. The Malaysian Lippo Group's founder, Mochtar Riady, received his initial financing from the Indonesian Salim Group's founder, Liem Sioe Liong, who

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obtained his early banking support from the Sophonpanich family of Thailand. At other times, the large overseas Chinese business families join forces to form joint ventures. Indonesia's Salim Group has teamed up with the Kuok family of Malaysia to develop a hotel and golfing resort in Indonesia and a cement factory in Wuhan, China. Both groups have combined with Thailand's CP Group. Stakeholders in the New China Hong Kong Group include Indonesia's Lippo Group, Hong Kong's Li Ka-shing's Group, Singapore's Trade Development Board, Taiwan International Securities, and ten mainland Chinese companies and ministries.

The private business sector of nearly every Southeast Asian country is dominated by companies owned by overseas Chinese entrepreneurs, who are quickly becoming a major global power.

Small enterprises rely on more formal overseas Chinese mutual help associations, typically based on family, clan, common locality in China, or dialect. The associations act like banks through which members can borrow money, trade information, recruit workers, and receive business introductions. They help enforce the "handshake" deals on which much of Chinese business is based. If a business owner violates an agreement, he is blacklisted. This is far worse than being sued, because the entire Chinese network will refrain from doing business with the guilty party. Bankruptcy or dishonesty not only redounds to the individual, but to the entire family and clan.

In the typical ethnic Chinese family firm, there is little separation between owner and management. The head of a Chinese company typically is an all-powerful paterfamilias who entrusts key positions to family members. Within the family, confidence in his judgment borders on the absolute.

Overseas Chinese firms have eschewed traditional business structures in order to capitalize on the weak system of contracting and law throughout Southeast Asia. Core business groups develop varying degrees of ownership in dozens, if not hundreds, of small- to medium-sized businesses. (There is no Chinese equivalent of such complex companies as Sony, Daewoo, or Procter & Gamble.) In turn, many of these businesses maintain cross-holdings with other family-controlled firms. The resulting web of holdings, when combined with the insertion of family members into key management positions, allows the family to maintain ultimate, albeit circuitous, control. This structure provides necessary secrecy and diversification in a region where the threat of governmental expropriation and ethnic discrimination is still pervasive.

Yet there are disadvantages associated with the family-run business. Keeping control within the family almost inevitably restricts the size, or at least the complexity, to which it can grow. That is not so much a problem for low-tech firms, but high-tech companies require sophisticated organizational structures.

The track record of second- and third-generation overseas Chinese managers is mixed. Frequently, these sons and daughters must manage the transition of the family firm from an entrepreneurial start-up to a modern corporation. Family ties can be so strong that incompetent relatives are preferred over outside professionals. The best and brightest Chinese entrepreneurs are trying to finesse the succession problem by taking their companies public, hiring professional managers, and sending their offspring to Western business schools. Ethnic Chinese firms' most noticeable weakness is a hesitance to enter the world of brand-name goods and mass-marketing. They often need the marketing and design capabilities that a Western company can offer.

What about the future? Great uncertainty clouds the outlook for China, especially after Deng Xiaoping passes from the scene. Through their extensive investments in the mainland, overseas Chinese businesses have exposed themselves to significant risk. At critical junctions, they are likely to exert their powerful influence to ensure the success of China's economic experiment, making them a key factor in the economic development—and ultimately the political transformation—of China and Southeast Asia.

In the most optimistic scenario, the mainland would move to peaceful capitalism, and the bamboo network would then face East to China and the Asian mainland. That combination of forces could enable China to become the major superpower in Asia early in the twenty-first century. By the year 2020, the United States and China would be in a race for the top slot in the world economy. On the other hand, should China destabilize or revert to communism, and mishandle the integration of Hong Kong, the bamboo network will likely face to the West. Overseas Chinese commercial families will develop closer ties with North America and Western Europe. At home, they will emphasize the substantial opportunities in Southeast Asia and Australia. An old saying among overseas Chinese is, "Keep your bags packed at all times."

However China fares, we believe the bamboo network will survive and likely continue on its traditional path of uneven progress amidst setbacks and opportunities. A critical element will be the Western-educated younger generation, who will try to exploit the tremendous possibilities that arise from combining their unique cultural characteristics with modern management and advanced technology. Their potential for success on a global scale is impressive. Yet it is not a foregone conclusion. In every culture, some of the wealthy's offspring merely indulge themselves and dissipate the wealth so painstakingly generated by their ancestors. We know many overseas Chinese business leaders who have this concern.

All in all, the inevitable vicissitudes that the resourceful members of the bamboo network will face in the years ahead will likely serve as challenges that strengthen their resolve and capabilities. Bamboo is the Chinese symbol for durability; it is flexible and constantly developing. In the words of the old saying, "Bamboo bends; it does not break."

This article is drawn from Murray Weidenbaum and Samuel Hughes' new book, The Bamboo Network: How Expatriate Chinese Entrepreneurs Are Creating a New Superpower in Asia *(The Free Press). Weidenbaum is chairman of the Center for the Study of American Business at Washington University in St. Louis, where Hughes served as the John M. Olin Fellow.*

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The Battle for Congress

By John H. Fund

The 1996 elections could have an unusual twist: the races for House and Senate may end up being more important than the presidential contest. The country is in a conservative mood, but clearly not in a partisan *Republican* frame of mind. That means Bill Clinton, campaigning as the most conservative Democrat to run for re-election since Grover Cleveland in 1892, could slip back into the White House. There his second term would be constrained by the deficit in much the same way that Republican Dwight Eisenhower had to accept the national consensus for New Deal programs. The real question is, Can Republicans solidify their surprising capture of both houses of Congress and gain another chance to convince the American people they can govern effectively? They have significant tactical and demographic advantages, but the last time the Republicans were able to elect a Speaker two times in a row was back in 1928, just before the Great Depression cast their party into political irrelevance for 20 years.

The key to continued Republican control of Congress will be the independent voters who cast protest votes against the Clinton administration in 1994. There is increasing evidence of political dealignment in America. Ross Perot's quirky candidacy in 1992 won 19 percent of the vote, the second-best showing of any non-major-party presidential candidate this century. "There is an incredible degree of disgust that voters have for both parties," pollster Del Ali of Mason-Dixon Research told *Congressional Quarterly*. Voter registration figures bear out the public's increasing distaste for partisan identification. In the 28 states with party registration, 5.7 million voters have registered with one of the two major parties since 1988. But nearly as many, 5.6 million, have declared they are unaffiliated or with another party. They will be the battleground voters for both major parties.

The Democratic strategy to regain the House is clear. They believe they can defeat up to 20 of the 74 House GOP freshmen by concentrating on vulnerable incumbents in the economically anxious Northeast and culturally liberal Pacific Coast. If they pick off a handful of GOP veterans who have grown lazy, and hold their losses in seats where Democratic incumbents are retiring to half a dozen or so, they have a chance of recapturing the House.

Republicans agree they will lose some freshmen, perhaps as many as ten. But GOP strategists believe they have a real advantage in the races for the 29 open seats now held by Democrats. Two-thirds of the open Democratic seats are in Southern states, where Republicans have a clear regional advantage. If they win a majority of those seats, it becomes highly unlikely they can lose control of the House.

If a faltering Dole campaign makes the outlook truly bleak, the congressional Republicans will argue that the country can't afford to turn the House back to the Democrats. That argument has some resonance. When voters in a recent poll were asked how they would vote for Congress if they *knew* Bill Clinton would be re-elected, enough switched their votes on a generic ballot test to allow the Republicans to retain control of both chambers. The public had its taste of one-party government in Clinton's first two years and didn't like it.

Why should voters be concerned about unified Democratic control of both the executive and legislative branches? The main reason is that the Democratic caucuses in both the House and Senate tilt in a liberal direction. The days when conservative Southern Democrats chaired important House committees will never return. Instead, many would now be chaired by representatives of liberal urban political machines. Think of John Dingell re-regulating commerce and Henry Gonzalez doing the same to financial services. Then look one step down, at the subcommittees that can make life awful for an administrator trying to undo his bureaucracy. Consider trying to reshape the tax code while answering to Charlie Rangel instead of Bill Archer. Or HUD, and reporting to Patrick Kennedy instead of Rick Lazio. You're a budget hawk and want to force the District of Columbia government to shape up? The new House chairman of the District Committee would be Julian Dixon, a welfare-state liberal from Los Angeles. Energy regulation? See 1960s retread Neal Abercrombie, not Sun Belt Republican Ken Calvert. Property rights? Instead of Alaskan Don Young, the point man would be George Miller, a committed greenie who has never met an expansive interpretation of the Constitution he didn't like.

The fact that all 435 House seats are up this year gives Democrats at least a chance of electing a Speaker. In the Senate it is unlikely that Republicans will lose control, although it could happen if there is a repeat of 1986, when the GOP lost every close Senate race and saw the end of the Senate control that Ronald Reagan's 1980 landslide gave them. The range of possible outcomes goes from a net GOP loss of two or three seats all the way to a Democratic loss of five or six, notes political analyst Charles Cook. The most likely outcome is for the GOP to pad its Senate majority slightly. The good news for the GOP is that there are eight Democratic open seats, and all of them are up for grabs. While six Republican Senators are retiring, only two seats (in Maine and Oregon) are in serious jeopardy of going Democratic.

The GOP is excited about its new governorships. It claims the chief executive in 32 states with 73 percent of the nation's population. If it can hold its own or improve on this in four years, its House majority could be solidified through redistricting if Republicans continue to hold one or both state legislative houses—as they do now in all of the 10 most populous states save Texas.

But will this happen? Republicans are in a nervous state, no longer confident that they are the new majority party. Why is the Republican party, which so clearly holds positions closer to more of the American people than Democrats, not yet able to solidify a new

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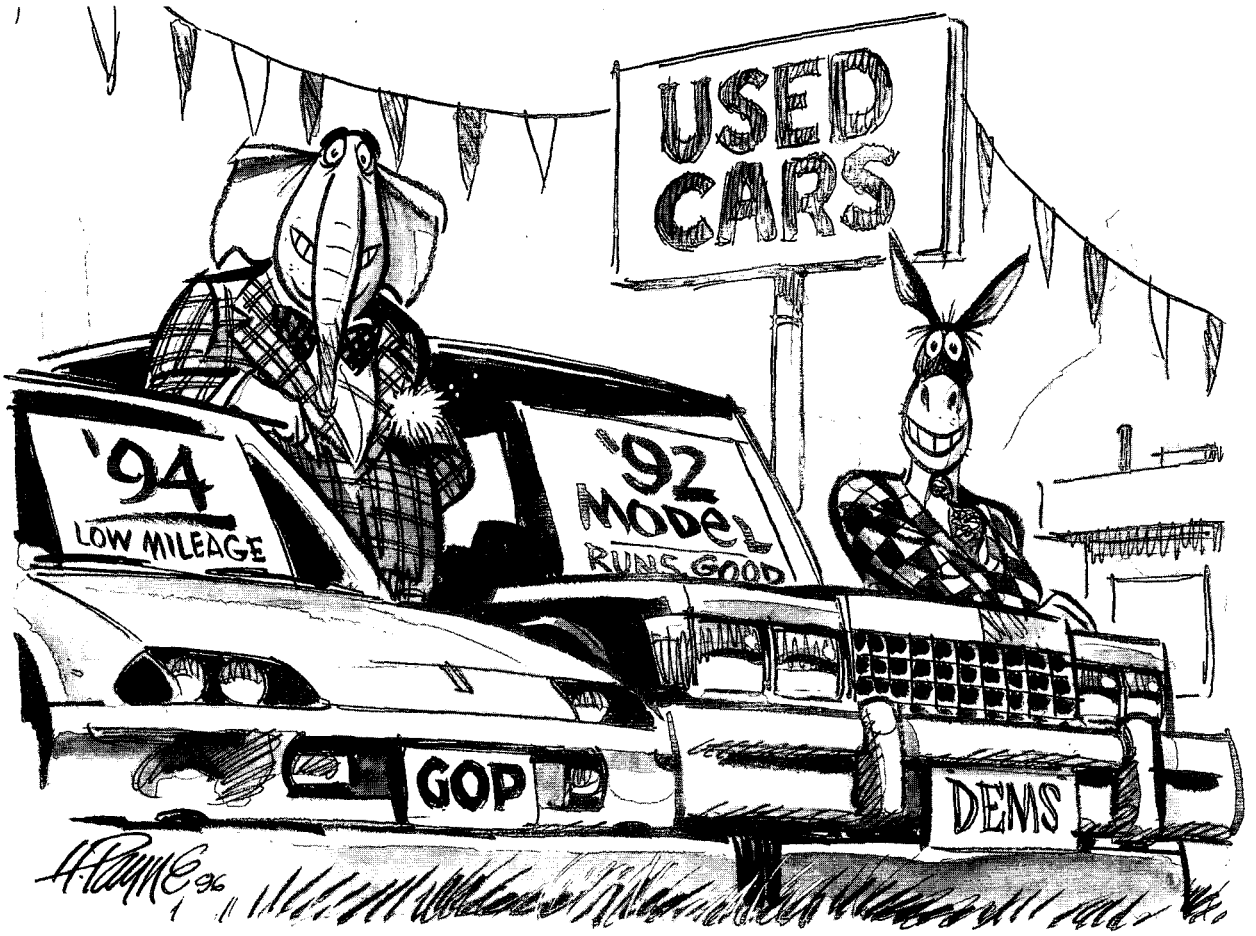

Illustration by Henry Payne

majority? The politics of demography have something to do with it. A higher percentage of voters are members of minority groups that have traditionally voted Democratic. Older voters are living longer and growing ever more attached to Social Security and Medicare, which in turn are now used to batter Republicans at each election.

More female voters are divorced or widowed, constituting a subdivision of the electorate particularly hostile to budget-cutting. In six of the past eight elections, women have given Democratic congressional candidates 54 or 55 percent of their votes. Men, on the other hand, have bounced around the parties, sometimes showing a six or seven point swing from election to election. At a time when women seem more risk-averse than ever, it is doubtful they will break with their previous electoral patterns. The continued shift to the right by their male counterparts is the real wild card.

Nonetheless, Republicans shouldn't panic and view the gender gap as a chasm. The shift to the right has included women, who are now twice as likely to call themselves "conservative" as "liberal," with a strong preference for "independent" as well. These trends are implicit rejections of the Democratic Party, long the home of women who were told that security would make a fine substitute for the opportunity many really want. Surprisingly, there are opportunities for Republicans among younger women. A poll commissioned by EMILY's List, a pro-choice feminist PAC, found 41 percent of white women under age 35 identify as Republicans, compared to 33 percent who say they are Democratic. Young women also give the GOP a 26-point advantage over the Democrats on the economy, and a 29-point lead on personal responsibility.

Even within the middle-aged, white suburbs outside the Deep South, however, the greening of America is still in progress, and the loss of suburban voters to Democrats on environmental issues is steady. What's causing this at a time when entrepreneurs and business are more celebrated than they have been in decades? Part of it is that many Americans are leery of the harshly competitive global market that most Republicans are identified with; this affects both shopkeepers and blue-collar workers who might have flirted with political realignment. At the same time, the affluence enjoyed by those who've fared well has created quality-of-life issues that Democrats exploit: for example, opposition to growth and to perceived health and safety threats.

The 1996 election finds the country divided almost equally between an increasingly conservative middle class, which is willing to challenge the status quo in such areas as Social Security and welfare, and a coalition of economically insecure groups and socially liberal voters for whom the economy is a secondary concern to "lifestyle" questions. Overall trends clearly favor the growth of the conservative voting bloc over time, but Democrats pin their hopes for a revival on the weakness of the Republican presidential nominee and the hope that their campaign to paint the Republican Congress as "extremist" will pay off. In the most likely outcome, Bill Clinton has a chance to convince voters he really is a "New Democrat" at heart and renew his lease on the White House, but voters are unlikely to hand back the keys to Congress to a party still locked in a welfare-state mindset that Americans increasingly reject. Regardless of the partisan results this November, the United States is inexorably moving to the right, and that will slowly move the center of both parties in the same direction.

John H. Fund is an Editorial Board member of the Wall Street Journal *and a contributor to MSNBC cable network.*

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Transcript

WORDS WORTH REPEATING

MAGAZINES AND THINK TANKS NOW OUTSHINE UNIVERSITIES

By Scot Lehigh

If ever there were a damning condemnation of the American academy, it is this: Universities, once the center of national thought, have ceded public leadership to the nation's think tanks and high-brow magazines.

The contrast is striking. A half-dozen think tanks have emerged as intellectual powerhouses whose ideas profoundly affect national debate, while magazines like *The Atlantic Monthly, Harper's, The New Republic, The Weekly Standard,* and *The New Yorker* crackle with intellectual energy.

On campus, by contrast, the hard sciences thrive, and business and public policy schools have kept a real-world compass. But open the door to the social sciences and humanities, and often you'll find not the creative tumult of fresh, relevant ideas but the stale odor of curdled opinion, moldy dogma, and chilled speech.

That's because being an academic these days is about ideology, not cultural competence. In the last few decades, increasingly arcane, mostly leftist, schools of thought have captured disciplines and colonized departments, moving them farther and farther from the mainstream realities of American life. Although there are many honorable exceptions, too many academicians have become so mesmerized by the pursuits of their own cloistered community they have lost sight of the larger society. At the same time, behavior codes designed to discourage politically incorrect behavior have inhibited the free flow of ideas.

The net effect has been to shift debate from the campus into more adventurous venues. For example, it's hard to conceive of universities generating the iconoclastic, real-world examination of issues—from crime, education, drugs, and race, to AIDS, affirmative action, and the underclass—that the numerous political magazines regularly present.

As for the think tanks, the ideas of the Progressive Policy Institute defined Bill Clinton's 1992 "New Democrat" campaign. The American Enterprise Institute and the Heritage Foundation influence a broad array of conservative policies, the Cato Institute has lent libertarian thrust to issues like immigration, education, and entitlement reform, and the Reason Foundation has helped make privatization a favorite Republican cost-saving solution. The Brookings Institution and other well-known foundations contribute still more ideas for debate.

Meanwhile, on-campus thinkers yammer on about opaque points of abstruse doctrine, in prose of a density more commonly associated with black holes than English. "The academy," says Brookings' Stephen Hess, "is talking so exclusively to itself, and in its own jargon, that increasingly it lives in its own world."

The problem compounds itself in university communities like Cambridge or Amherst or Berkeley, where ideological outlook tends to be fused with social identity. There, a faculty member follows his sense of truth beyond the boundaries of accepted orthodoxy only at the risk of committing both ideological and social trespass.

Richard Hogarty of the University of Massachusetts says the current academic climate began in the anti-Vietnam War era, which radicalized campus opinion, and continued as 1960s radicals moved into teaching positions. He cites the busing battles of the mid-1970s as one local example of the academic community's intolerance of differing opinions: "You were construed as a racist if you saw anything objectionable to court-ordered busing at the time."

Harvard Law School Professor Alan Dershowitz says the same tendency toward intellectual conformity exists at Harvard. "I just don't see a lot of courage or guts or willingness to be unpopular...the independent thinker is kind of put off on the side."

Indeed, a 1994 survey of faculty in the Massachusetts public education system found that barely half the faculty surveyed rated the esteemed University of Massachusetts at Amherst as a place where differences of opinion can be aired openly. Only a third of the faculty surveyed at the Lowell campus said their school was tolerant of diverse opinions.

A related mark of the low value placed on openness is the willingness of scores of colleges to sacrifice free speech. Campus speech codes "are a growing phenomenon that is part of a deeply anti-intellectual movement that has been afoot in the American academy for at least a decade and is getting worse, not better," charges Harvey Silvergate. "I am from the libertarian Left, and it pains me that these assaults on liberty are coming from the Left."

At Harvard, Dershowitz supports the code—but for reasons that further question the institution's commitment to academic freedom: "I don't trust the university community," he says. "That is why I need rules to protect myself and my students from my colleagues."

But the problem with efforts to ban any expression that "creates a hostile environment" is that regulating speech usually becomes a subjective exercise that risks chilling any speech found objectionable. Kenneth Lasson, a University of Baltimore Law School professor, has compiled examples of recent excess. "Inappropriate laughter," for instance, can land you in trouble at the University of Connecticut, while students at the University of Minnesota can be disciplined for displaying "callous insensitivity to the experience of women."

This close-minded, over-cautious atmosphere is one reason former academics praise the working environment of think tanks—and why some academicians worry about the future of their own institutions. "People are going to find out that what their kids are being taught is not something that is going to be terribly useful for them in later life," says David Popenoe, a Rutgers dean. "Sometimes I think the academy should just be busted open to bring in new blood."

Scot Lehigh writes for the Boston Globe*'s "Focus," from which this article was adapted.*

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In Real Life

THE DAILY WORK OF AMERICANS

WHAT I DID WITH MY SUMMER VACATION

By Mary Elizabeth Podles

Some of the Podles' children, some of the neighbors', and possibly some of yours.

Every five years, my alma mater sends a begging letter. Not one asking for money; those come every three weeks. This one asks for news. "What have you been doing since we last heard from you? Fill in this blank page which will be sent around to all your classmates." The prospect is always a little daunting. Some of us opt out altogether; my freshman roommate sent in Roz Chast's cartoon depicting *Bad Housekeeping* without comment. I always need a little prodding to make the effort. Will I make a fool of myself? Will my classmates shake their heads over all that wasted potential? Will they eye me askance when they hear I am home-schooling my shockingly large family, and wonder if I am the first graduate of the college to join the Vipers militia? Every time the members of some anti-government survivalist cult are arrested and their poor home-schooled children paraded across our TV screens, a distinct frost arises in my neighborhood, and some of the local residents begin again to gently query my friends, my near-neighbors, my cleaning lady: Are those children really all right? Are they really being properly socialized?

Some, it is true, have stopped asking. They are the parents of the nine extra children presently in my kitchen making peanut butter sandwiches. Perhaps these offspring have been sent over on missionary work, to help with the proper socialization of the Podles children, or perhaps it is something else. When my own boys recently went away to Scout camp, I found I had inadvertently opened a small-scale boarding house, with five more children and a dog from four different families sleeping over, one of them a cousin of the family across the street who moved in with us for three days of her four-day visit. We have been known to answer the phone at dinner time with the greeting, "Hello, Used Children's Exchange." I have even learned a little Spanish talking on the phone with a frequent visitor's Peruvian nanny.

Some people cynically suggest I begin charging for day care. But these children have enough of that during the school year, and besides, I would not be so unsubtle. Instead I have simply reinstated the bad old practice of conscripted child labor, and we have excavated quite a respectable pond in the back yard. Everybody helped. What I had envisioned as an all-summer project was mostly dug out in a day, long before I had even phoned away for the Lilypons catalogue. True, without some of my helpers, we probably could have done it in half the time, but it was meant as a cooperative project, and it was. It also inadvertently turned into an impromptu science lesson. Psychologists have determined that children around the age of four ask approximately 600 questions a day. I would add that at least half of them begin with the word *Why*. "Why do we have to level the pond's edges?" Because otherwise the water would spill out the low side. "Why would it?" It's like a cup when one side is up and the other is down—water falls out. "Why does it fall out?" And so on. People ask me when my school lets out for summer. I will let them know when I find out. Right now, though, I am busy researching pond ecology and trying to calculate the proper snails-to-fish-to-plants ratio.

During my researches into the mysteries of water gardening, I discovered a wonderful book written by one of the college classmates I hope not to have let down. She studied landscape architecture in that loveliest of cities, Kyoto, and now designs gardens so elegant and lush that I could scarcely refrain from drooling over her book. I remember her from Mrs. Anderson's Early Renaissance Art—tall and serene, unruffled by the cruelest exam. When my ship comes in, I will hire Julie to design me a beautiful garden like a harbor, a promontory, an island, a journey of the mind.

I do not know how it will look swarming with all of these children. But in the

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meantime, I have a backyard with a pond. It does not look like one of Julie's archetypal landscape spaces, an image of paradise. It looks a little like a Pictish escarpment with a mild case of drunk staggers. Some day it will be full of graceful, slow-moving Japanese carp. Right now it's full of little boys planning to decorate it with frogs, tadpoles, and Lego men in very small cement overshoes.

Still the alumnae questionnaire is on my mind. "Have my children hindered my career advancement?" it asks. Certainly not. They have scuttled it forever, like the leaf boats proceeding towards the pond-sized Davy Jones's locker. Do I have any regrets? I will not say I never look back, nor wonder where I might be now if I had chosen otherwise. Most of my neighbors are serious professional women with interesting and fulfilling careers. Might not I fit in better were I still one of them? Maybe, but I would be missing all the fun. And I wouldn't have a pond.

Mary Elizabeth Podles writes from Baltimore, Maryland.

THE SANE MULTICULTURALISM OF BROOKLYN

By Joseph J. Jacobs

For 80 years I lived the multicultural experience. My parents were uneducated immigrants from Lebanon who came here as adolescents nearly 100 years ago. Their familiar language and that of our ethnic enclave in Brooklyn, New York, was Arabic. But all seven of us children went to public schools where we spoke English, even to those from other Lebanese families.

Our family had none of today's multicultural conflicts. When Mom and Dad spoke to us, often in Arabic, we answered in English. Lebanon was a wonderful country of nostalgic memory, but the United States was our home, our future, and especially our opportunity. Though they felt more comfortable with their Lebanese culture, my parents' highest hope was for their children to become "American." And none of us has had his pride in his Lebanese culture diminished by becoming an enthusiastic, loyal American.

DESPITE THE NATURAL TENDENCY TO HUDDLE TOGETHER IN ETHNIC ENCLAVES, THE LURE OF THE MELTING POT MADE US ALL AMERICANS FIRST AND "WHATEVER" SECOND.

They had no problem harmonizing nostalgic memories of beautiful Mount Lebanon with gratitude for the freedom and opportunity in their cherished land of adoption. We, too, admired the freedom that attracted them away from the cruel Ottoman rulers of Lebanon. We knew we must be well-educated so that we could join the mainstream of American culture. *A*'s in English were expected.

When I visited Lebanon, I saw the destructive potential of multiculturalism. I had seen hints of it among the Lebanese in Brooklyn, but the overwhelming sense of being American made tribal rivalries trivial. My parents' country, I quickly realized, was being destroyed by multiculturalism.

Riven by 13 different tribal loyalties, the Lebanese are a caricature of what extreme multiculturalism can do. Fifteen years of suicidal inter-tribal fighting laid the people prostrate, only to be "rescued" by Syrian intervention. Although the Lebanese are some of the most sophisticated and best-educated people in the Middle East, they have never understood the obligations of statehood. Despite their westernized culture, they have difficulty acknowledging that they owe primary allegiance to their country rather than to their tribes.

Americans, by contrast, have benefited immensely from an abundance of natural resources, but our great strength as a nation has been the successive waves of "hungry" immigrants. Despite the natural tendency to huddle together in ethnic enclaves, the lure of the melting pot made us all Americans first and "whatever" second. We were taught to cherish our ancient heritages at home and in our local community. But we were also taught to cherish America in school and in the broader community.

I cannot understand liberals' endorsing multiculturalism, because it essentially negates the civil rights victories they should take great pride in by returning us to the some-people-are-more-equal-than-others arguments the civil rights laws were supposed to abolish. It's bad enough that multiculturalism is infecting academia, but the introduction of bilingual teaching in grade schools is more insidious. Based on my experience in Brooklyn, it's unquestionably wrong.

Bilingual education is, however, a shining example of compassion gone wrong. Is it painful for a child raised in a home where only Spanish is spoken to learn English? Of course it is, but no more so than learning to spell or to do arithmetic. Is it kind to spare them the pain of learning English? Hardly. But turning children out into an English-speaking society thinking English is a second language—*that* is cruel. Like so many instances of liberal "compassion," it is virtuous in theory, destructive in practice.

Now the extension of this faulty thinking includes the printing of bilingual voter ballots, bringing disunity to one of democracy's central rituals. Need we apologize for asking those who come here to adapt to our common culture? After all, opportunities for immigrants' children were and are unbounded for those who join the American mainstream as quickly as they can, as my family like so many others demonstrates.

Of course, if you don't like the American experience, you can always move to the Middle East and enjoy all the multiculturalism you want.

Joseph J. Jacobs, founder and chairman of the board of Jacobs Engineering Group, is the author of The Compassionate Conservative *and* Anatomy of an Entrepreneur.

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SCHOOL REFORM IN MISSOURI

By Blake Hurst

April in Missouri brings spring gales and school board elections. As always, I endured the wind, but after nine years of service on the Westboro, Missouri, school board, the elections went on without me. As I wrote in these pages last March, our school was the victim of the state education bureaucracy's notions of reform, and the small, declining population of our rural school district. People asked me to run for the board of the school district that swallowed up the Westboro district, but I declined. To my mind, presiding over a bankruptcy tends to disqualify me from further service.

Besides, my experience as president of our school board made me a dubious about education reform and a definite skeptic about my ability to improve the quality of education. Local control of schools is a fine tradition, to which we in Missouri still pay lip service. Indeed, the preface to the "Show-Me Standards"—Missouri's effort to define what students should learn in Missouri schools—insists that "Missouri law assures *local* control of education."

But the majority of the funding for our small school came from the state of Missouri, and that money did not arrive in Westboro without strings attached. Not only does the state control the purse strings, it also has the power to close schools that don't play by the rules and regulations laid down by the Missouri Department of Education. The folks who wrote the Show-Me Standards know local control is a myth, and they wouldn't have it any other way.

My son Ben is nine, with crooked teeth, an inquisitive mind, and the normal small boy quotient of stitches and broken bones. He has an opinion on almost every subject and will share those opinions without prompting. He loves baseball, museums, reading about the Lakota Sioux, Ozzie Smith, and school, especially his gifted class, which meets once a week. So far, he has lived a full but rather unexamined life. Which is more than the educrats can stand. His gifted class spent entirely too much time with a course of study called, "The Me I'm Learning to Be." Ben hated it, and his disgust at wasting time on examining his feelings caused his teacher to consult with Ben's mother. Ben's dad agrees with Ben.

THE SCHOOL GIVES A FIVE-FOOT-TALL TROPHY TO THE TOP ATHLETE, BUT DOESN'T WANT TO HURT ANYONE'S FEELINGS BY NAMING THE TOP STUDENT.

But if the lack of ability to change things and a total disdain for spending time on the self-esteem and innermost emotions of nine-year-olds weren't reasons enough to end my political career, the laws that govern the relationship of teachers to their employers put paid to any residual interest I might have had. Permit me a pungent example. Our school district has two secondary math teachers. One teaches eight classes a day. The other teacher has lost interest in teaching, and the feeling, you might say, is mutual. He has elicited so many complaints from students and parents that he presides over seven study halls every day. I suppose we're lucky the local powers-that-be can at least keep him away from inquiring minds sevens periods a day. But the same laws don't stop at protecting incompetents already on the job. They also keep good people away from teaching by requiring all teachers to be certified by schools of "education"—thus preventing talented people with real expertise from sharing their knowledge with students, all so that teachers can be protected from competition.

Three simple things would improve education. First, introduce accountability. Teachers hate standardized tests and fight very hard to prevent the publication of test results on a school-by-school or classroom-by-classroom basis. But if algebra teachers' records were as well publicized as football coaches' won-lost totals, students would learn more math. Secondly, the $11 billion that the federal government spends on higher education should come with some minimum requirements. If student loans only went to students who were prepared for college, more students would be prepared for college. Students should be required to show mastery of at least basic skills in order to receive a high school diploma. Finally, academic achievement should be more highly rewarded. Our local high school publishes the names of the top five students in each graduating class but does not name a valedictorian. This is ridiculous. The school gives a five-foot-tall trophy to the top athlete, but doesn't want to hurt anyone's feelings by naming the top student.

Still, I see some signs of improvement. My children spend more time on homework than I did at their ages. Which may say more about me than the educational system but is encouraging nonetheless. And the University of Missouri has raised its entrance requirements, forcing high school students in Missouri to work harder. The St. Joseph, Missouri school system has begun publishing building-by-building results from the state achievement test. After a couple of years of this, the scores from schools in the poorest part of the city have increased dramatically.

But the fight is far from over. My wife and I attended hearings on the latest proposed standards for Missouri education. The first standard in "communications arts" simply requires that students be proficient in "speaking and writing standard English (including grammar, usage, punctuation, spelling, capitalization)." One teacher passionately objected, claiming that proper English, grammar, and punctuation kill creativity. He added that he used to have to "waste time" teaching spelling, but now uses the whole language method, which doesn't waste students' time with details like punctuation.

Maybe I should file for the board of education elections after all.

Farmer Blake Hurst of Tarkio, Missouri, is a regular contributor to The American Enterprise.

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the Election Economist

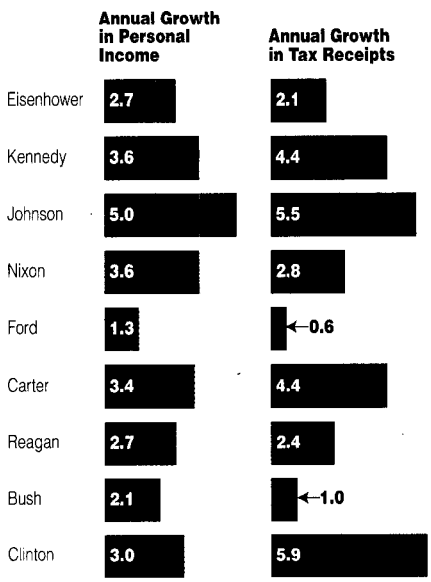
Your Presidential Vote Could Cost You

by T.J. Rodgers

If you'd like to see the U.S. economy grow while your tax bill shrinks, you should be careful when casting your vote for president. Here are three reasons to pull the lever for the Republican candidate.

Reason one: In the post-World War II era, from Eisenhower through Clinton, all Republican presidents allowed personal income to grow faster than federal tax collections, while all Democratic presidents have allowed tax collections to grow faster than personal income. That categorical statement separates every Democrat from every Republican, even big-spending Republicans like Bush and Ford.

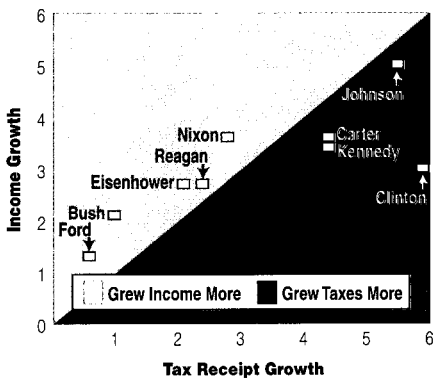
INCOME vs. TAX GROWTH



Source: U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis.

I repeat: Since 1952, *every* Democratic president has increased taxes faster than personal income, and *every* Republican president has allowed personal income to grow faster than revenues. (Clinton's 5.9 percent annual growth rate in tax receipts is a record.) It is counterproductive to raise tax revenues faster than income, but the Democrats have not recognized it once in 42 years, nor have the Republicans once ignored it, as the following chart shows.

INCOME vs. TAX GROWTH

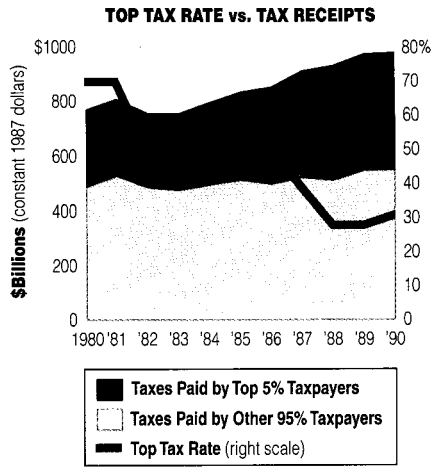


Source: U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis.

Reason two: Only a Republican president could convince the American people that the government should increase the taxes collected from the wealthiest 5 percent of Americans—by lowering the top tax rate. Ronald Reagan lowered the top rate from 50 percent to a post-World War II low of 28 percent. Yet while tax rates went down, tax revenues went up: From 1981 to 1988, tax receipts went up by an average $126 billion each year. Annual tax receipts from the top 5 percent of taxpayers went up by more than that, while taxes collected from the rest actually fell.

When tax rates are low, wealthy people reinvest money more often and thus pay more taxes. When rates are high, the wealthy are skillful enough to avoid the full nominal tax burden. And so when Ronald Reagan lowered the top rate, he ended up taxing the rich more, while simultaneously reducing taxes for the remaining 95 percent of Americans—not just as a percentage of taxes collected, but in absolute dollars.

TOP TAX RATE vs. TAX RECEIPTS



Source: U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, U.S. Internal Revenue Service.

Actual tax collections are remarkably independent of tax rates, but Democrats, with their slogans about "taxing the rich," never seem to understand this.

Since 1952, the percentage of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) collected in federal taxes has hardly varied from a median of about 19 percent, although top rates have fluctuated wildly from 89 percent to 28 percent. The question for politicians is simple: Do you want the 19 percent of GDP the American people will allow you to collect as federal taxes to come from a robust, lightly taxed economy or from a sluggish, heavily taxed economy? The current Congress would have cut our top rates if it had had the support of a supply-side Republican president, instead of resistance from an administration that declared Americans undertaxed.

Reason three: No post-World War II President has been able to "stimulate the economy" by increasing government spending, as Clinton believes he can. When that has been tried, the government has always grown faster than the economy.

GDP has grown an average 2.9 percent per year since 1952, while government

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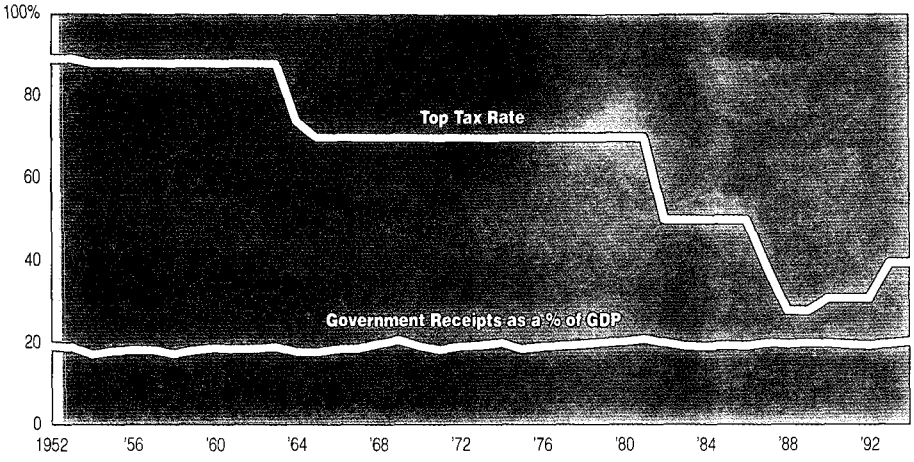
spending has grown more rapidly at 3.2 percent per year. If we compare growth rates of GDP with government spending, we see that not one president—Democrat or Republican—who increased government spending by more than the 2.9 percent GDP growth rate has seen the economy grow faster than the government. And every president who curbed government spending by keeping its growth *under* 3 percent per year has permitted GDP to grow faster than the government. The 104th Congress has tried hard to cut the rate of growth of government spending, and the reduced federal spending growth Clintonites are currently crowing about has resulted. We would be better off, however, with a president who helps Congress restrain spending, instead of one who resists restraint.

History clearly shows what's needed to make Americans better off. We should cut tax revenues so personal income rises faster. We should lower the highest income tax rate so that the highest 5 percent of taxpayers are encouraged to take capital gains and reinvest, thus paying more taxes and stimulating the economy. Someone has to convince Americans that reduced tax rates—anathema to liberal Democrats—are actually a good deal for the average American. Finally, we should slow the growth in federal spending and allow the economy to grow faster than the government. No Democratic president would or could support these three economic policies. That's why we need a Republican in the White House.

GOVERNMENT RECEIPTS VERSUS TAX RATES



Source: U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, U.S. Internal Revenue Service.

T.J. Rodgers, who has a Ph.D. in electrical engineering from Stanford University, is president and CEO of Cypress Semiconductor.

continued from page 5

the very people for whose moral benefit the anthropologists established it in the first place. The complaint the underdeveloped countries advance is not that they are being Westernized, but that there is too much delay in giving them the means to Westernize themselves. It is of no use to defend the individuality of human cultures against those cultures themselves."

A sincere effort to study other cultures "from within" requires a rejection of the Western dogma of cultural relativism. Multiculturalists who wish to take non-Western cultures seriously must take seriously their rejection of relativism. Otherwise, a humble openness to other cultures becomes an arrogant dismissal of their highest claims to truth.

Schools should provide young people with an authentic multicultural curriculum that begins at home but is nevertheless open to the world beyond. Such a canon would be modestly Eurocentric, in recognition of the fact that we live in a Eurocentric world; that Europe has dominated the rest of the globe in the modern age; and that while popular culture in American is a cultural hybrid, the philosophical, political, legal, and economic institutions of this country are the product of Western civilization and no other.

Yet this new curriculum would also be cosmopolitan, seeking to criticize and enrich the West with ideas imported from abroad. An authentic multiculturalism would expose students to "the best that has been thought and said" not simply in the West but in other cultures as well. The object is not diversity but knowledge: Students should learn ways to seek to distinguish truth from falsehood, beauty from vulgarity, right from wrong. Knowledge is both a matter of ascertaining facts, as well as developing the tools to formulate "right opinion." To use Plato's famous image, we live our lives in a cave, where much of the light of truth has been deflected into the shadow of perspective and opinion. But a sound multicultural education should aspire to help us move from opinion to knowledge, to climb out of the darkness into the illuminating light of the sun.

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Flashback

To know nothing of what happened before you were born is to remain ever a child—*Cicero*

The Old College—Why?

One of the most annoying lines in contemporary pop music is from Rod Stewart's "Maggie May," in which the wizened Scot sings, "It's late September and I really should be back at school."

To those who loathe college life, Stewart's sentence, with its casual and arrogant assumption of privilege, conjures images of shaggy-haired rich kids tossing Frisbees on the quad as marijuana smoke wafts through an air that is thick with hostility toward the outlying "townies."

For the vast majority of Americans, the superior lyric would be, "It's late September and I really should be playing football/harvesting pumpkins/reading Hawthorne." There are a handful of supple fellows who can live in both worlds—Vernon Parrington, our greatest literary historian, taught English *and* coached football at the University of Oklahoma, but Parrington only proves that the better the Sooner.

It may be unthinkable now—like a day without television—but in years long gone, America's youth had attractive alternatives to the college track. Though we've not had a college-less president since Harry Truman and are unlikely ever to have such again, the oldest callings—parenthood, farming, carpentry, storytelling—still require no parchment, at least not yet. To take one example, many of the most distinctive and iconoclastic American writers of our century fall into two categories: those who hated college, and those who never bothered to go.

The latter group is vast and various: it ranges from H.L. Mencken to Ernest Hemingway to Gore Vidal to Ray Bradbury to William Saroyan. They were joyful participants in what Vidal calls "the worst perversion of all, autodidacticism."

American writers used to be able to serve their apprenticeships on newspapers, rather than in Masters of Fine Arts programs in soulless multiversities. "If you would learn to write," instructed Ralph Waldo Emerson, "'tis in the street you must learn it.... The people, and not the college, is the writer's home."

The irrepressible Henry L. Mencken recalled, "At a time when the respectable bourgeois youngsters of my generation were college freshmen, oppressed by simian sophomores and affronted with balderdash daily and hourly by chalky pedagogues, I was at large in a wicked seaport of half a million people, with a front seat at every public show...and getting earfuls and eyefuls of instruction in a hundred giddy arcana, none of them taught in schools."

Mencken as grad student is no more plausible than Bill Clinton as Benedictine. Thomas Wolfe (the first one) found graduate students an "intellectual peasantry—dull, cold, suspicious of any idea they had not been told to approve," and it was the genius of Mencken (and most autodidacts) to think outside the prescribed boundaries. (Rarely will you meet a thoughtful non-college-educated person whose political views conform to the contours of the "liberal" or "conservative" procrustean beds.)

Who would say that Mencken's education, in his and his family's Baltimore, was inferior to the one he'd have received if his old man had shipped him off to Princeton? Could he have majored in "Baltimore" at Princeton? More to the point, can one major in "Baltimore" at Johns Hopkins?

A recent critic of institutional schooling, the Kentucky poet-farmer Wendell Berry, charged that "the child is not educated to return home and be of use to the place and community; he or she is educated to *leave* home and earn money in a provisional future that has nothing to do with place or community."

Who would say that Mencken's education, in his and his family's Baltimore, was inferior to the one he'd have received if his old man had shipped him off to Princeton?

And so Jennifer College ends up on K Street in Washington. Or Wall Street. Or anywhere beyond Baltimore or Kentucky.

Golden ages turn sere; that was then, and this is now. An H.L. Mencken of 1996, whose only credential was a coruscant prose style, could pound the pavement from dawn to dusk, 365 days a year, and after all that leather his resumes would sit in Gannett and Knight-Ridder wastebaskets from Miami to Puget Sound. "Frankly, Henry," the gatekeeper of the newspaper chain would tell him, "you're not a bad writer—I could see you eventually working your way up to our Style section—but in all candor, corporate policy prohibits me from hiring you without that degree. I can recommend a few good journalism schools...."

So, undergraduates, September has arrived, and everyone says you really should be back at school. You might give a thought to Henry Adams, who looked back on his Harvard days none too wistfully: "The chief wonder of education is that it does not ruin everybody connected in it, teachers and taught." If you have a subversive soul, then read books that aren't on any reading lists, and give special study to your own Baltimore, wherever that may be.

—*Bill Kauffman*

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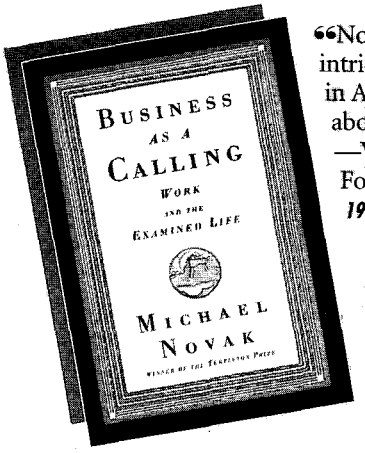

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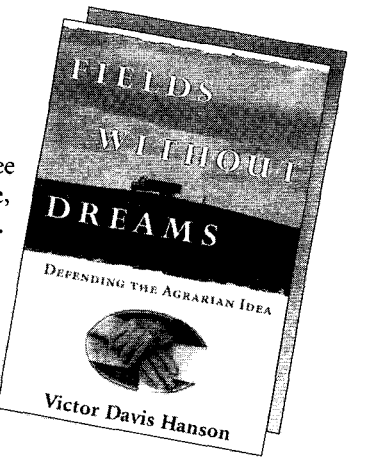

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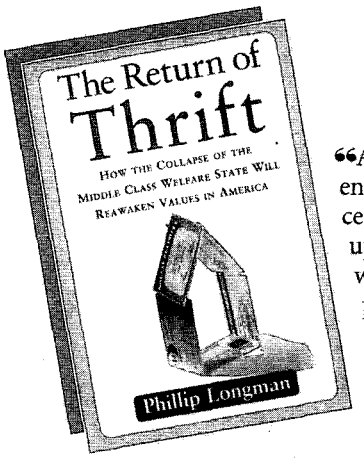

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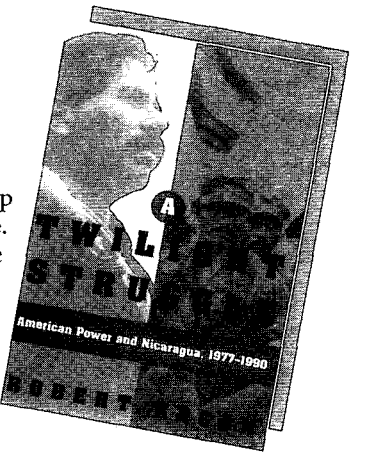

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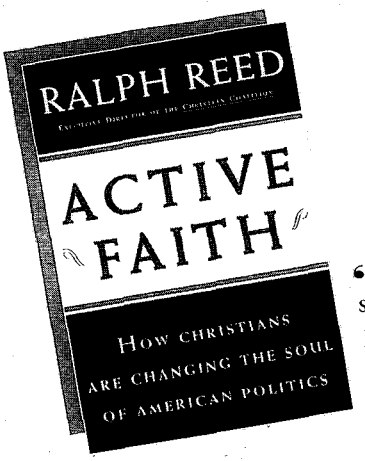

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BookTalk

GET THE PICTURE?

By Robert Koch

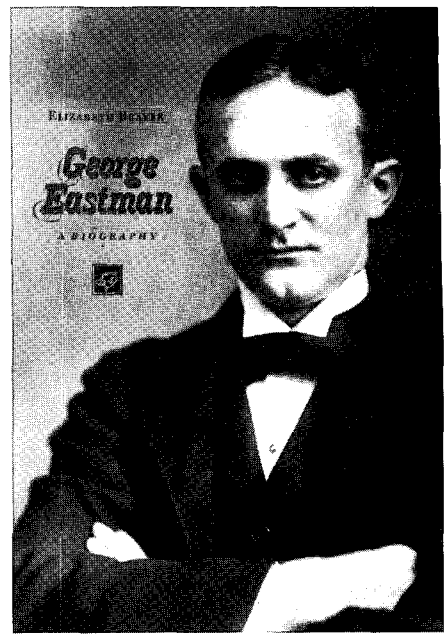
George Eastman: A Biography
By Elizabeth Brayer; Johns Hopkins University Press, 637 pages, $39.95

The elderly Thomas A. Edison appears to operate an early motion-picture camera while his less well-known and somewhat dour companion holds a serpentine length of motion-picture film. The 1928 photograph snapped at George Eastman's mansion is an Eastman Kodak icon; it immortalizes the marriage of Eastman's flexible film with Edison's Kinetoscope, which in turn begat the movies. The photograph is among more than five dozen in Elizabeth Brayer's *George Eastman: A Biography.* The first life of the Rochester inventor, industrialist, and philanthropist since 1930, it is also the first that can claim essential independence, while relying on the authority of the immense file of his often-colorful letters. The photo's seemingly dyspeptic 74-year-old Eastman is half a century away from the exacting young bank bookkeeper who found wet-plate photography so cumbersome that he did something about it in his spare time. While not a fecund inventor of Edison's type, he was an entrepreneurial and marketing genius whose film and inexpensive "Kodak" cameras created an industrial empire and snapshot democracy worldwide.

A 1900 formal photograph of Eastman in his mid-forties still reflects the spiritedness of the 27-year-old who resigned from the bank and sailed to England to improve manufacturing processes and plant financial and marketing roots. He was confident that foreign trade would "distribute our eggs and pad the basket at the same time." Brayer tells well the complex struggles with patent protection, manufacturing quality, business acquisitions, marketing strategies, and, eventually, governmental fears about monopoly. Eastman sometimes worked to exhaustion, despite having energy with which he bounded two steps at a time to his second-floor office. His lifelong habit was to play equally hard during often extensive trips devoted to bicycling, camping, fishing, and hunting. He was, however, never farther than a cablegram away from company decisions at all levels.

As an industrialist he manufactured products that were, literally, volatile. Nitrate film was such a fire hazard that Eastman was nearly obsessed with fireproof buildings, including his mansion. Photographic materials also demanded unflagging quality control to build in retainable photosensitivity. The tinkerer and amateur chemist soon hired young, technically trained university graduates. Sophisticated research and development produced new film, camera, and chemical products that flowed from the assembly lines and continuous process machines of the highly integrated Eastman Kodak Company. Manufacturing facilities burgeoned in Rochester and abroad, and "Kodak," coined by Eastman for its multilingual clarity, was soon a household term celebrated even by Gilbert & Sullivan.

George Eastman expected as much from employees as he did from himself but rewarded the successful with lifelong jobs and a range of benefits. He began an early corporate suggestion system and issued the company's first employee bonus, from his personal profit, in 1899. Pension plans followed. In 1914 Eastman hired young Marion Folsom, later an architect of Social Security, to centralize the company's "statistics." Witness to his boss's conduct of industrial relations, Folsom later observed that Eastman was "the only man I ever knew who started out conservative and ended up a liberal."



Eastman, the philanthropist, did not establish a foundation: "Men who leave their money to be distributed by others are pie-faced mutts. I want to see the action during my lifetime." On another occasion he added, "A rich man should be given credit for the judgment he uses in distributing his wealth, rather than in the amount he gives away." He did not seek kudos, even though those inevitably followed. He targeted his moves as carefully as he had while developing the photographic giant. Eastman's philanthropies reflected both his industrial needs and personal life. He gave nearly $20 million to MIT, at first anonymously, in gratitude for quality alumni who contributed to the company's development. But his nearly $36 million in gifts to the University of

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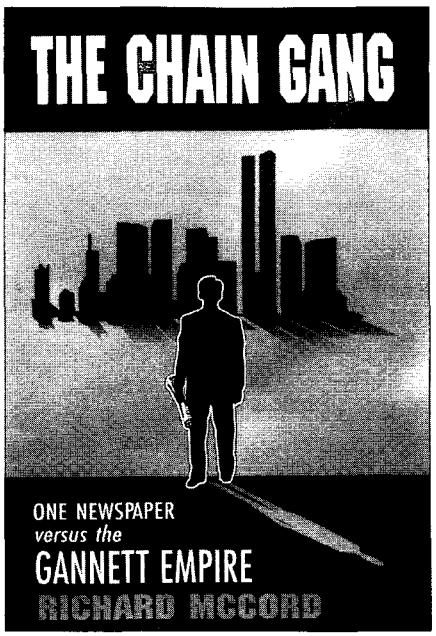
Rochester had more to do with affection for his "hometown" and concern for the quality of life of his employees. The University's new medical school and dental clinic were gifts for the community's body, but the magnificent Eastman Theatre and renowned Eastman School of Music were the core of a "musical scheme" to stir and sustain its soul. He watched over their development with a gardener's care. Large gifts to the Tuskegee and Hampton Institutes had other roots.

George Eastman, the man, like GE, the tycoon and philanthropist, was many faceted. Although he enjoyed the company of women and children, he never married. The mansion he built was as nearly perfect as his intense work with architects could make it, from special gardens to giant organ, whatever the inevitable cost. His daily life was thoroughly disciplined, his camping gear specially designed (by him), his later interests in local government and the calendar "scientific." In his early seventies he enjoyed two long-deferred hunting safaris in Africa. An eclectic reader, he had well-thumbed copies of the Roman Stoics Epictetus and Marcus Aurelius. In his seventy-eighth year, after several years of failing health and progressive debility, he wrapped a Luger pistol in a towel and shot himself through the heart on March 14, 1932. His final note read, "My work is done. Why wait."

Brayer's big book triumphantly mines Eastman's extensive correspondence and reports of those who knew him well. It is a complex and frequently sparkling story of invention, industrial growth in a changing America, personally managed philanthropy, and a little-known, intriguingly complex personality. The carefully selected photographs are well reproduced. My only quibble is with its 637 pages of heavy, shiny paper, but GE probably would have approved.

Robert Koch, a former professor and administrator at the University of Rochester and the Rochester Institute of Technology, hosts a radio show on WXXI-FM, Rochester's public radio station.



McPAPERS EVERYWHERE

By Theodore Pappas

The Chain Gang: One Newspaper Versus the Gannett Empire
By Richard McCord; University of Missouri Press, 290 pages, $24.95

My hometown of Rockford, Illinois, is a typical medium-sized city. Its school system is run by a federal judge; strip malls, chain restaurants, and cookie-cutter condos are both the cause and effect of the current business boom; the hot hangout is the java bar at the "local" Barnes & Noble; and the one daily newspaper, published by Gannett, is the target not only of ceiling fans set on low but of lawsuits for violations of antitrust laws.

Now, the first three features are not unique to Main Street America, but as Richard McCord explains in *The Chain Gang: One Newspaper Versus the Gannett Empire*, the last one is. In Rockford, Illinois; Green Bay, Wisconsin; Salem, Oregon; and a host of other towns from sea to shining sea, Gannett has pursued the same scorched-earth policy: buy up all of the papers in a community, squeeze out the competition that cannot be bought off, and establish a monopoly over local advertising (in Rockford, this meant taking over *Rockford Magazine* in addition to the daily *Register Star*). Then, like a colonial power exacting tribute, the company hikes advertising rates to unprecedented levels, reduces the number of column inches devoted to news, and slashes the size of the editorial, reporting, and production staffs.

None of this is really news. Ben Bagdikian, in *The Media Monopoly* (1983), showed how profit squeezes were common to all chain-owned local papers, and that the real reason "serious news" is not found in these publications is not, as the corporations claim, that the public doesn't want it, but that it is more expensive to produce than features. A 1987 article in *The New Republic*, entitled "Invasion of the Gannettoids," said the problem is Gannett's "corporate culture. The product *is* the company—cheerful, superficial, self-promoting, suspicious of ideas, conformist, and implicitly authoritarian."

Allen Neuharth himself, after he retired as chairman of Gannett in 1989, gladly echoed these critics in his autobiography, *Confessions of an S.O.B.* In what amounted to an exposé on himself, he bragged about his unscrupulous career, esurient habits, and took pride in such "achievements" as forcing old friends into unwanted retirements and outmaneuvering business associates by eavesdropping on their phone calls. He even recalled with relish his boyhood tantrum that cost his poor widowed mother a chance to remarry. "Judging by what he relates," said a reviewer in *Fortune*, "the man who built Gannett into America's largest newspaper chain and created *USA Today* is a conniver, backstabber, and liar, an executive so utterly without principle and so totally self-absorbed and so self-indulgent he could startle even the most cynical muckraker."

Gannett's rotten corporate culture is certainly an old story, but McCord—who for 25 years was a journalist at *Newsday*—focuses on more than this. He provides details and case studies of the company's illegal tactics, explains how these practices affect local communities, and shows how the Gannett empire thrives despite the many lawsuits filed against it since the early 1970s.

The newspaper referred to in the title of this book is the *News-Chronicle* in Green Bay, Wisconsin. Its publisher, Frank Wood, had read McCord's gutsy 1981 article in the *Santa Fe Reporter*

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about the lawsuit filed against Gannett by the publisher of a weekly community paper in Salem, Oregon. Entitled "The Newspaper That Was Murdered," McCord's 10,000-word article gained him national attention; it also made him the one person whom all editors in the country under assault from Gannett wanted to recruit for help in mounting their own defense. Hence Frank Wood's interest in Richard McCord.

The details of the Salem case are important, for they reflect the type of tactics used by Gannett in similar markets throughout the country. After buying up and consolidating the two daily papers in Salem, which resulted in the firing of 31 employees and the reduction of news coverage by *90 column-lengths* a day, Gannett began a campaign called "Operation Demolition." (Gannett's recent campaign to squeeze out the free community papers in Rockford was reportedly called "M.A.S.H."—"Make a Shopper History.") The object was to kill the small *Willamette Weekly*, and the means to this end were both creative and illegal. For example, Gannett's sales reps, called "Dobermans," were instructed to spread lies about the *Willamette Weekly*'s publisher going broke; to offer free advertising to any business severing ties with the community paper, which meant staggering losses for the Gannett-owned daily paper, but losses which a national corporation like Gannett could sustain indefinitely while it drove out the competition; and to offer all-expense-paid trips to Reno and Lake Tahoe to the executives of large companies, such as Kmart, that also stopped advertising in the *Willamette Weekly*—all of which were "unfair and illegal anticompetitive and monopolistic practices" in violation of federal antitrust law.

The rest of the book concentrates on McCord's extended stay in Green Bay in late 1989, when he helped Frank Wood fend off similar assaults by the Gannett-owned *Green Bay Press-Gazette*. McCord's narrative is riveting, as David-versus-Goliath tales often are, but he obscures his message with unnecessary digressions, as when he drones on—and on—about the long Wisconsin winters, bemoans his poor sex life, and discovers to his dismay that Packer Town enjoys the highest per capita number of bowling alleys of any city in the country.

Though McCord has been successful in battling Gannett, he is by no means optimistic about reforming the corporate giant. He points to the deferential treatment Gannett receives from Republican administrations, which honor antitrust enforcement largely in the breach; to the "Bible" of the newspaper industry, *Editor & Publisher*, which refuses to report on many of the lawsuits filed against Gannett, the magazine's biggest advertiser; and to the many journalism schools that hesitate to criticize Gannett for fear of offending the largest employer of their graduates and one of their principal sources of institutional grants.

All of which means—bring on those awards for "Best Investigative Paragraph." Gannett is here to stay.

Theodore Pappas is the managing editor of Chronicles: A Magazine of American Culture.

MUGGERIDGED BY REALITY

By Mark Falcoff

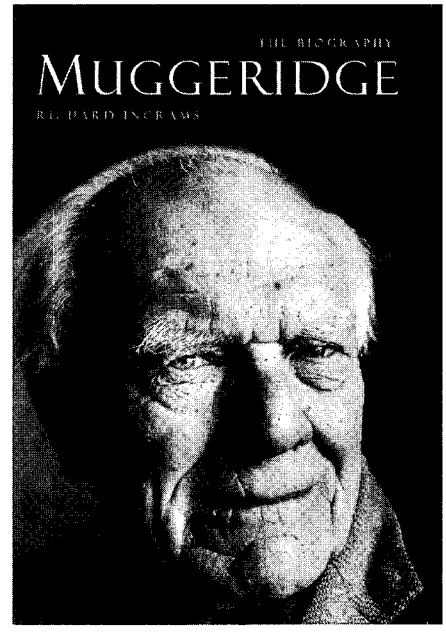
Muggeridge: The Biography
By Richard Ingrams; Harper San Francisco, 264 pages, $27.50

For Americans born after 1960, the name Malcolm Muggeridge, if it means anything at all, refers to an eccentric English writer best known for his defense of orthodox Christianity. A handful of graduate students or lettered conservatives may know him as well from two volumes of memoirs published in 1972-3 under the provocative title, *Chronicles of Wasted Time*. The truth is, there have been several Muggeridges along the way, and in this brief but remarkably complete biography Richard Ingrams gives us a glimpse of each.

Born in 1903 at the height of Edwardian England's glory, Muggeridge died in 1990 at the age of 87, having lived a remarkably full and adventurous life. The son of a Labour councillor and M.P., he won a scholarship to Cambridge and, after a brief period teaching at a Christian school in India, launched into a career as a journalist. He married Kitty Dobbs, the niece of Sidney and Beatrice Webb, thus forming an alliance with what might be called the Royal Family of British Socialism.

After a time writing editorials for the *Manchester Guardian*, the paper sent him to Russia as its correspondent. There he discovered the awful truth about the Soviet experiment, and in three lengthy articles about the Russian famine revealed the existence of forced labor in the Soviet Union.

The series provoked an immediate response from Walter Duranty, the *New York Times*' resident Soviet correspondent (and apologist), and angry letters of rebuke from, among other personalities, Bernard Shaw and the historian A.J.P. Taylor. (The latter's protest to the *Guardian* included this remarkable passage: "Think of the fact that a new generation is growing up free from Christianity—that's something worthwhile.")



The controversy eventually led Muggeridge to part company with the British Left. He resigned to take a job in India with the *Calcutta Statesman*, followed by a posting as a foreign correspondent in Cairo. During World War II he joined MI6—the British counterintelligence service—working first in Portuguese Africa and later in liberated Paris.

After the war, he accepted a job with the *Daily Telegraph*, first as an editorial writer and then its correspondent in

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Washington. In the 1960s he took over as editor of the humor magazine *Punch* and, what made him far better known to the British public, as host of a television interview program when that medium was still in its infancy.

To *Punch* he brought political satire and anti-establishment humor. He attacked the monarchy in terms that seem remarkably restrained in the light of today's tabloid journalism, but which at the time caused headlines around the globe. To television he brought a provocative style of interviewing which few of his guests ever forgot. (My personal favorite is his question to the Spanish artist Salvador Dali: "I know we're supposed to discuss modern art…but first of all may I say I'm fascinated by your moustaches. Might I ask you what happens to them at night?" "They droop," Dali replied.) In later years, he was to make a series of important documentaries, including one which introduced Mother Teresa of Calcutta to the world.

Throughout his life Muggeridge had been alternately attracted to and repelled by Christianity, constantly flirting with (and finally joining) the Roman Catholic Church. During the late '60s and '70s he became something of a "hot gospeller" and a public intellectual opposed to abortion and euthanasia. His sudden embrace of religiosity stands in stark contrast to his smarmy personal life, which until his conversion included serial infidelities, long periods of abandonment of his wife and family, and excessive drinking.

Some said that Muggeridge gave up sin when he was finally too old to enjoy it. As his biographer points out, this fails to do justice to a long spiritual struggle in which good finally prevailed over evil. Even the most sympathetic reader, however, will not fail to be appalled by the way he treated his long-suffering wife, Kitty.

Two aspects of this book call for additional comment. One has to do with the picture it provides of the upper reaches of British socialism in the 1930s, and particularly of the Webbs. In spite of the halo of sanctity that still surrounds their legend in American academia, this couple are revealed here to have been plainly evil. "It's true that in the Soviet Union people disappear," Mrs. Webb told Muggeridge, warming her hands by the fire and pronouncing the word with relish, more in envy than reproach. When Muggeridge's wife protested that the food in the Soviet Union was worse even than that which unemployed men in Manchester would expect, Mrs. Webb's response was worthy of Marie Antoinette: "Well, my dear Kitty, if you don't like the food you can always order rice pudding—I do." Not to be caught short, Sidney Webb publicly repudiated what he called "the slander that there is forced labor in the Soviet Union." Most of the arguments used to counter Muggeridge's exposé of the Soviet system are still used today by apologists for places like Castro's Cuba, often in the same language and, sad to say, appearing in the very same newspapers.

One also comes away from this book struck by the vast diversity of world-class figures with whom Muggeridge crossed paths—many before they were well known. Those making cameo appearances include Harold Macmillan, the Beatles, Mother Teresa, Svetlana Stalin, and Graham Greene, as well as Gandhi, superspy Kim Philby, mystery writer Dorothy Sayers, Billy Graham, and General Douglas MacArthur.

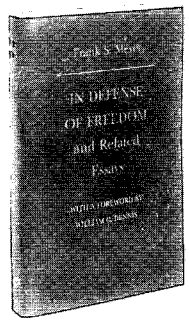
As a journalist, Muggeridge was lucky, but he also knew how to make the most of his opportunities. More to the point, however, he seems not to have been overly impressed with what the British call the great and the good. A firm independence of mind, combined with a slightly perverse tendency to bite the hand that fed him, made him a fascinating and—with all his other failings—ultimately attractive character, deserving of every page of this book.

Mark Falcoff is a resident scholar at the American Enterprise Institute.

Classics for Today's Readers

IN DEFENSE OF FREEDOM AND RELATED ESSAYS

By Frank S. Meyer
Foreword by William C. Dennis



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WE'RE ALL POST-LIBERALS NOW

By Paul Gottfried

Enlightenment's Wake: Politics and Culture at the Close of the Modern Age
By John Gray; Routledge, 202 pages, $29.95

Like most of his earlier books, particularly *Post-Liberalism*, John Gray's newest work deals with the death throes of universalist liberalism. A fellow of Jesus College, Oxford, and a frequent lecturer at Ivy League universities, Gray has presented his thoughts on this subject in respected forums for more than 20 years. Though his heart lies with what he recognizes as classical liberal civilization—i.e., the rule of law and settled custom, a market economy, and Victorian manners—Gray also recognizes that his own pre-

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ferred arrangements derive from a time-bound society already mostly disintegrated. He speaks of the Western liberal order and ways of life as "historical contingencies" and insists that it is self-defeating to claim for either universality.

He is particularly scathing in describing the "innocent parochialism" of Francis Fukuyama's revival of the "Enlightenment philosophy of history in its most simplistic form." Writes Gray: "The Soviet collapse has fueled a Western triumphalism in which modernization and Westernization are conflated, the spread of market institutions and the globalization of Western civil society are confounded, and the 'final triumph' of 'democratic capitalism' is announced." As Gray points out, most non-Western societies have borrowed selectively from the West: taking its technology and adapting its market economy, while trying to maintain their own political and cultural habits. It is hard to imagine why this will change, even in Eastern Europe, because of the collapse of the Soviet empire. In fact, argues Gray in some detail, the attempts made by American advisors to rebuild Eastern European societies from the ground up have now created a political backlash, reflecting both economic dislocation and cultural shock.

Gray also stresses the changes that have befallen the "Enlightenment project" in Western cultures, especially the erosion of belief in liberal premises about human nature. The coexistence of dramatically different cultures has helped to undermine the notion, which liberalism took from Christianity, that only one view of the good could make men virtuous and societies just. According to Gray, the universalist and natural rights-driven liberalism which took form in the eighteenth century has by now lost credibility. What have taken its place are post-Enlightenment liberalisms, which emphasize procedure and orderly conflict without making metaphysical demands.

Gray is keenly critical of the "legal liberalism" which he identifies with John Rawls and Ronald Dworkin. In their speculative constructs there is no place for politics, as opposed to the sorting out of rights claims and the distribution of material benefits. For both of these self-identified democratic socialists, "basic questions about liberty and the restraint of liberty are decided by legal and not political reasonings; by judicial review, not by legislation." So minimal is their recognition of any shared cultural or political matrix that such thinkers do not even acknowledge their own specifically American frame of reference. They are writing in defense of judicial and administrative governance in the framework of American ideological debate, but they claim to be presenting prepolitical axioms that have no specific cultural foundations or necessary and limiting historical context.

Though Gray dissects Dworkin and Rawls brilliantly (in his case for the third or fourth time), it seems to me that these thinkers' allergy to the legislative will has nothing to do with classical liberalism. Nineteenth-century liberals tried to restrain the popular will for diametrically opposed reasons from those that explain Dworkin's and Rawls' aversion to political debate. William Lecky, François Guizot, and other nineteenth-century liberals were terrified of the social experimentation and redistributionist schemes which they associated (properly in my mind) with mass democracy. Dworkin and Rawls, by contrast, are afraid that this experimenting binge might stop. The people might call a halt to rule by judges and public administrators, which would spoil the kind of apolitical politics Dworkin and Rawls would like to continue.

Finally, it is never made clear what common features make up the "liberal" tradition Gray sees running from Thomas Hobbes to contemporary "liberal" thinkers. In his books, Gray rightly insists on the need to understand liberalism in its own "social matrix" or cultural homeland. But then he moves away from this particular approach to speak of liberal ways of life and liberal forms of thought. Yet the second approach simply does not carry very far beyond a few generations of thinkers unless one looks for derivative influence. Unlike Gray, I do not see much of the thinking of Immanuel Kant in John Rawls: the first was a strong theist and an avowed ethical universalist; the second is a dishonest nonfoundationalist and a socialist engaged in rearranging fragments of John Locke's social contract theory.

As for the first approach to defining liberalism, which I prefer, it may be even less helpful to Gray. It makes one understand that liberalism, which was an artifact of a bourgeois, predominantly Protestant civilization, has been in decline through most of this century. And it has also been supplanted by the culture and regime of those who attacked it most fiercely but continue to call themselves "liberal." Given this view, all of liberalism is now post-liberal, and the crisis of liberal society, which Gray locates primarily in the last 25 years, first became noticeable almost a hundred years earlier. It is the rise of the managerial state, with its successive social-engineering projects, which led to the "liberalism" defended by Dworkin and Rawls. This process also completed the burial of a liberalism that no longer exists as a coherent body of ideas—and of the class who once embodied it.

Paul Gottfried is professor of humanities at Elizabethtown College. His books include The Conservative Movement *(1993).*

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the Digest

SUMMARIES OF IMPORTANT NEW RESEARCH FROM THE NATION'S UNIVERSITIES, THINK TANKS AND INVESTIGATIVE PUBLICATIONS

POLITICS

The Cities Battle The States

Charles Mahtesian, "Semi-Vendetta: Cities and the New Republican Order," in Governing *(June 1996), 2300 N Street N.W., #760, Washington, D.C. 20037.*

When Republicans took over state legislatures in the 1994 elections, urban Democratic leaders across America were dismayed. For years, their Democratic allies in the statehouses had ensured that these cities received plenty of state aid. But now, reports *Governing* staff writer Mahtesian, the Republican agenda in the states "involves a rearrangement of power unlikely to bring much comfort to the traditional forces of urban Democratic politics."

Cities have been losing clout in state capitals for years. Part of the reason is demographic, as suburbs gain population that cities lose. In 1948, for example, 48 percent of Illinois' population lived in Chicago. Today, only 21 percent does. Cities that remain Democratic strongholds also have far less influence in Republican-controlled legislatures. When for the first time in 22 years Republicans captured the Illinois legislature in 1994, Chicago's delegation of three Republicans and 43 Democrats had far less influence than they once had.

According to Mahtesian, the Republicans who run statehouses are more interested in patronage than revenge, in funding highways than mass transit systems, and in taking over authorities that control airports, stadiums, and other development projects. Republicans in Illinois are challenging Chicago's Democratic mayor, Richard Daley, over whether a third Chicago airport should be built in Democrat-controlled Cook County or in the Republican-dominated distant suburbs.

How can cities regain their influence in Republican-ruled statehouses? Electing a few more Republicans would certainly help. But urban Democrats, Mahtesian argues, must understand that Republican legislatures will no longer give cities blank checks.

The Fight For Free Trade

C. Fred Bergsten, "Globalizing Free Trade," in Foreign Affairs *(May/June 1996), Council on Foreign Relations, 58 East 68th Street, New York, New York 10021.*

Bergsten, director of the Institute for International Economics, says history shows how every advance in lowering international trade barriers has met with a protectionist backlash. Now that the latest treaties to liberalize trade have been signed, he argues, world leaders should keep free trade momentum going by aiming for an unprecedented goal: global free trade by 2010.

In return for elimination of their tariff barriers, the wealthy nations of Europe, North America, and Asia would obtain unrestricted access to the markets of other countries. Such a bargain would open up new markets to export-oriented businesses in the advanced nations and also open the lucrative markets of the West and Japan to the less well-off nations.

While America can do a great deal to advance free trade, Bergsten contends that the U.S. cannot "forge the next global trade initiative by itself." It should work with Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), a Pacific-rim trade alliance whose members, including the U.S., China, and Japan, account for half the world economy. The World Trade Organization can also help, particularly if it expands its membership to include China and Russia.

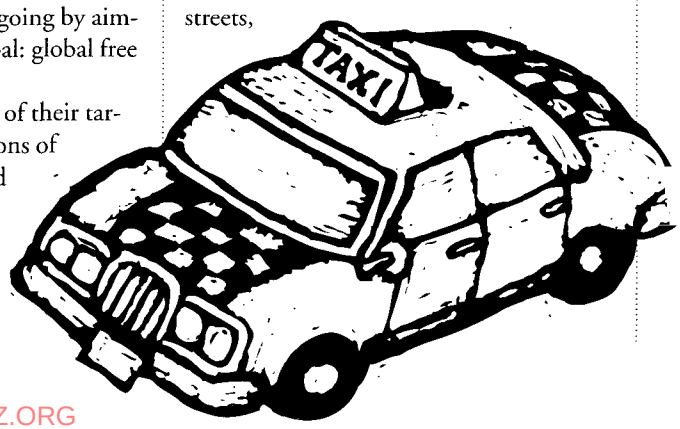
Global free trade, he believes, "would preclude the risk that regional arrangements would develop into hostile blocs."

ECONOMICS

License to Kill Jobs

William H. Mellor, "City Hall's License to Kill Civil Society," in Policy Review *(July/August 1996), Heritage Foundation, 214 Massachusetts Avenue N.E., Washington, D.C. 20002.*

When an entrepreneur trys to open a business, he usually finds an arbitrary bureaucratic obstacle in his way—the licensing board. More often than not, argues Institute for Justice president Mellor, the licensing board ends up stifling free enterprise while failing to protect consumers. An example of the anti-competitive nature of licenses is New York City's Taxi and Limousine Commission, which strictly limits the number of taxis on the city streets,



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ensuring that permission to drive a cab can cost as much as $200,000. Similarly, van drivers who provide illicit jitney service from low-income areas to downtown can have their vehicles confiscated by the police if they pick up anyone at a public bus stop.

The training requirements imposed by New York City, according to Mellor, lack "any semblance of coherence." The city requires cosmetologists to undergo 1,000 hours of training before they can style hair, but gun-toting security guards only need to be trained for 47 hours before they obtain a city license.

Licensing boards also hurt nonprofits. Since 1969, San Antonio's Teen Challenge has used Bible-based methods to fight drug abuse at a cost of $25 a day—3 percent as much as comparable government programs. In 1995, the Texas Commission on Alcohol and Drug Abuse, threatened to shut Teen Challenge down or fine the organization $25,000 a day because it did not use "qualified credentialed counselors" using state-approved therapy techniques. Though the commission eventually backed down, other credentialing agencies could certainly crack down on groups that use God instead of psychology to fight drugs.

Licensing boards, Mellor concludes, "in the name of professionalism, authority, and standardization, stifle the very attributes that lead individuals to make the world a better place."

Breaking the Long-Distance Monopoly

Cynthia Beltz, "Talk is Cheap," in Reason *(August/September 1996), 3415 South Sepulveda Boulevard, #400, Los Angeles, California 90034.*

Thanks to competition, American long-distance telephone rates have fallen by 50 percent in the past decade. But thanks to largely state-owned telephone monopolies, European and Asian telephone charges remain high. While international negotiations aimed to promote telecom competition stagnate, Beltz of AEI reports that entrepreneurs are steadily denting worldwide government telephone monopolies.

Over 100 "call-back" companies, for example, allow European and Asian telephone users the opportunity to call a

"trigger number" in America, which then redials the overseas number and provides an American dial tone. This service allows people in other countries to make calls at American long-distance rates—nearly 50 percent lower than their foreign counterparts. Governments in Argentina, South Korea, China, and South Korea have tried to ban these callback services, but have been unable to do so.

The Internet may also prove a formidable competitor. Such innovative firms as CallWare Technologies, Digiphone, and VocalTec are developing technologies that will allow voice transmissions to be routinely sent over the Net. Fax transmissions over the Net have a particularly bright future. International agencies like the World Trade Organization have so far proved ineffective in promoting telecom competition. Global telecom talks stalled this spring, but "in this chaotic world of converging markets and rapidly changing technologies," Beltz argues, "government should do what it can to promote a uniform, stable framework of rules."

What Glass Ceiling?

Michael Lynch and Katharine Post, "What Glass Ceiling?" in The Public Interest *(Summer 1996), 1112 16th Street N.W., #530, Washington, D.C. 20036.*

It's accepted wisdom among feminists that women earn less then men do and that this "wage gap" can only be closed by affirmative action programs. Pacific Research Institute fellows Lynch and Post agree that women, on average, currently earn 74 percent of what men do. But they argue that this gap is caused *not* by discrimination, but by womens' decisions to pursue lower-paying jobs.

Women with comparable educations earn less than men. True, because women are more likely to choose lower-paying fields of study than high-paying technical ones. In 1992, for example, women earned a majority of the nation's advanced degrees in education, English, and ethnic and cultural studies, while men earned majorities in engineering, physical sciences, and business. Feminists who argue that teachers and social workers are "undervalued" because they are "women's work", Lynch and Post argue, are partially right. More people want to be teachers than technicians, and the large number of potential applicants accounts for relatively low wages.

Women are paid less than men. Yes, because women are more likely to leave the labor force to have and raise children, and these gaps ensure that women have less seniority and lower wages. The Bureau of the Census reports that women spend 15 percent of their wage-earning years not working, compared to under 2 percent for men. And according to Department of Labor statistics, women are less likely to work overtime than men.

The "glass ceiling" prevents women from being CEOs. The average boss spends 40 or 45 years climbing the corporate ladder, but few women in 1955 or '60 started business careers; so few are now ready for the highest jobs today. The number of female CEOs should rise as the number of experienced women rises. Feminists ignore more important trends, such as the rising number of women who are entrepreneurs.

Qualified women, Lynch and Post contend, now earn as much (or more) than comparable men. "The differences [in earnings] that now exist," they argue, "are the result of individual choices, not of third-party discrimination."

SOCIETY

Miranda Rights and Wrongs

*Paul G. Cassell, "*Miranda*'s Social Costs: An Empirical Reassessment," in* Northwestern University Law Review *(Winter 1996), 357 East Chicago Avenue, Chicago, Illinois 60611.*

When the Supreme Court in its 1966 *Miranda* decision mandated that

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police read suspects their rights before they are interviewed, and stop the interview if the suspect requests a lawyer, Justice Byron White dissented. He predicted the legacy of *Miranda* would be that in "some unknown number of cases the Court's rule will return a killer, a rapist, or other criminal to the streets and to the environment which produced him, to repeat his crime whenever it pleases him."

Cassell, who teaches at the University of Utah's law school, argues that Justice White has proven right: *Miranda* "has significantly harmed law enforcement efforts in this country." In the 1960s, criminologists conducted scores of studies on the effects of *Miranda*. Reviewing these studies, Cassell found eight to be methodologically sound, and these studies reported that police obtained 16 percent fewer confessions than they did before *Miranda*. Moreover, Britain and Canada, which have less strict rules about interviewing suspects, retained higher confession rates. Confession rates are important because they are direct admissions of a criminal's guilt. Indirect methods of proving guilt are far less successful.

Cassell calculates that about 24 percent of the time, a suspect who doesn't confess is acquitted. Using FBI crime statistics, Cassell estimates that *Miranda* ensured that 28,000 violent criminals and 79,000 burglars and thieves weren't convicted of their crimes in 1993.

Cassell also argues that it is possible that *Miranda* most adversely affects police success when dealing with repeat offenders. Four studies in the United States and Great Britain found that hardened criminals were less likely to confess than were first-time offenders.

Cassell suggests that the *Miranda* decision can be reformed in two ways. First, two requirements would be eliminated: allowing the suspect to end the interview at any time, and forbidding any interview to begin until the suspect agrees. Second, police should tape all interviews. Mandatory videotaping, currently the law in Great Britain, Australia, and Canada, should provide ample protection against police brutality. And requiring the remaining *Miranda* warnings to be given would also guard against abuse while not imposing technicalities that allow criminals their freedom.

The legacy of *Miranda*, Cassell contends, is that it has ended any discussion about better ways the police can conduct proper interrogations. Perhaps it's time for *Miranda* to be replaced by "alternatives that might better protect not only society's interest in apprehending criminals but also criminal suspects' interest in preventing coercive questioning."

The Future of Social Security Is Past

Carolyn Weaver, "Birth of an Entitlement: Learning from the Origins of Social Security," in Reason *(May 1996), 3415 South Sepulveda Boulevard, #400, Los Angeles, California 90034.*

One of the most oppressive parts of Social Security is its punitive nature. Every American, rich or poor, has to hand over as much as 15 percent of his income each year to Social Security, removing the possibility of investing the money in more productive retirement methods, such as IRAs or 401(k) plans.

AEI's Weaver argues that history provides valuable lessons for the debate over Social Security privatization. "Far from being universally embraced when first considered," she writes, "Social Security was bitterly contested in the 1930s, and was, at the time, the radical alternative."

The notion of compulsory social insurance was vigorously debated before the Great Depression, but such a bill was not introduced by FDR until 1935. Sen. Bennett Clark (D-Mo.) proposed an amendment that would have allowed workers to opt out of Social Security if their employer offered a more generous private pension plan. Clark argued that since private pension plans were increasing (particularly since contributions to them became tax-deferred in 1926), workers should have the freedom to choose between private and public plans.

Supporters of social insurance realized that the enactment of the Clark amendment would disrupt the hoped-for redistribution of income, since workers would choose whether or not to accept a state pension. "If we shall adopt this amendment," argued Sen. Robert LaFollette, Sr. (Progressive-Wisc.), "the government... would be inviting and encouraging competition with its own plan which ultimately would undermine and destroy it."

Though President Roosevelt threatened to veto the Social Security Act if it contained the Clark amendment, the Senate nonetheless voted to include it. When the House did not approve the amendment, the Social Security bill was held up in conference. Senate negotiators finally agreed to drop the Clark amendment if a similar provision could be considered in a future legislative session. After the Social Security Act became law, the Clark amendment was never reconsidered.

Weaver suggests that today's Social Security reformers consider ideas such as partial and total privatization. By doing so, innovators are following a trail that Clark first laid out over 60 years ago. For when it comes to Social Security, she argues, "the best new reforms lie in some old ideas."

The Stories Funerals Tell

Richard T. Gill, "Whatever Happened to the American Way of Death?" in The Public Interest *(Spring 1996), 1112 16th Street N.W., #530, Washington, D.C. 20036.*

In 1963 Jessica Mitford's *The American Way of Death*, an exposé of the funeral industry, was published. Though the book was considered shocking at the time, free-lancer Gill predicts that the forthcoming revised edition of Mitford's book will be less controversial, because Americans' interest in funerals has dwindled over the past 30 years.

Americans are spending far less on funerals than in the past. In 1960, the country spent $6.9 billion (in constant 1987 dollars) on funerals, or about 0.35 percent of the GDP. By 1993, funerary spending had fallen to $2.5 billion, or 0.15 percent of the GDP. Americans increasingly prefer cheaper cremations to more traditional funerals. The Cremation Association of North America reports that the percentage of cremations rose from under 4 percent in 1960 to nearly 20 percent by 1993.

Cemeteries are also treated with less respect than in the past. For many troubled youths, desecrating a grave is a perverse rite of passage. "In the nineteenth century, residents gathered in the thousands

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to celebrate the formation of a new cemetery, notes historian David Charles Sloan. "Today, protesters lobby legislators to forbid their creation or expansion."

Gill argues that several trends in American society are responsible for the declining importance of funerals. Americans are less likely to care about how they will be remembered in 75 or 100 years, as self-centeredness and narcissism cause many people to care less about any generation but their own. This "temporal myopia," Gill argues, manifests itself in the lack of attention paid to children and to the dead, since "both reflect a given generation's interest in its own well-being over the course of its own life-span, and a general lack of interest in the future that will be inherited by one's children."

The decline of the funeral says much about the way we live. Social changes that generated more interest in funerals might also encourage parents to do more to help their children.

OTHER COUNTRIES

Ghosts in Eastern Europe

Johnathan Sunley, "Post-Communism: An Infantile Disorder," in The National Interest *(Summer 1996), 1112 16th Street N.W. #540, Washington, D.C. 20036.*

When Soviet Communism collapsed, a conventional wisdom developed about Central and Eastern Europe. Such books as Robert D. Kaplan's *Balkan Ghosts* and Tina Rosenberg's *The Haunted Land* argued that the former Soviet satellites were imprisoned by their history—particularly the years between World War I and World War II, when fascist and militarist movements dominated regional politics. These countries, it was claimed, would eventually succumb to long-suppressed nationalist urges until their economies blossomed with market-oriented policies.

Windsor Group executive director Sunley disagrees. It's more accurate, he argues, to see Central and Eastern Europe as a region where former communists still rule, and where economic prospects remain gloomy. The ghosts that haunt Eastern Europe, in Sunley's view, are communist, not fascist. These nations, with the important exception of the Czech Republic, made no attempt to purge former communists from politics. The acquittal last year of long-time Bulgarian strongman Todor Zhivkov ensures that no Eastern European communist leader of the Soviet era is in jail.

In most of the region, nationalism remains a minor issue. Some leaders, such as Yugoslavia's Slobodan Milosevic, use nationalist rhetoric as a tool to maintain power. But many of the region's "powder kegs"—the Poles in Lithuania, the Hungarians in Romania and Slovakia, and the many minorities in Macedonia—have mysteriously failed to ignite. Sunley explains that these nationalist movements have been "fragmented, divided, unfunded, and in a number of cases harassed, intimidated, and simply banned." By concentrating on these weak opposition movements, Western journalists ignored a more important fact—that communist parties remained strong, cohesive, and ready to reassume power.

Economically, Eastern Europe remains a poor region. According to the International Monetary Fund, most of these nations won't return to their 1989 income levels until at least 2010. While some successful businesses have been created, many more "enterprises" are little more than money laundering and Ponzi schemes. And former Russian communists are eager to enmesh the region in "joint-venture" corporations that will economically bind former colonies more closely to Moscow.

Perhaps Eastern Europe can be reformed, but Sunley urges Westerners not to be fooled by new names for old tyrannies.

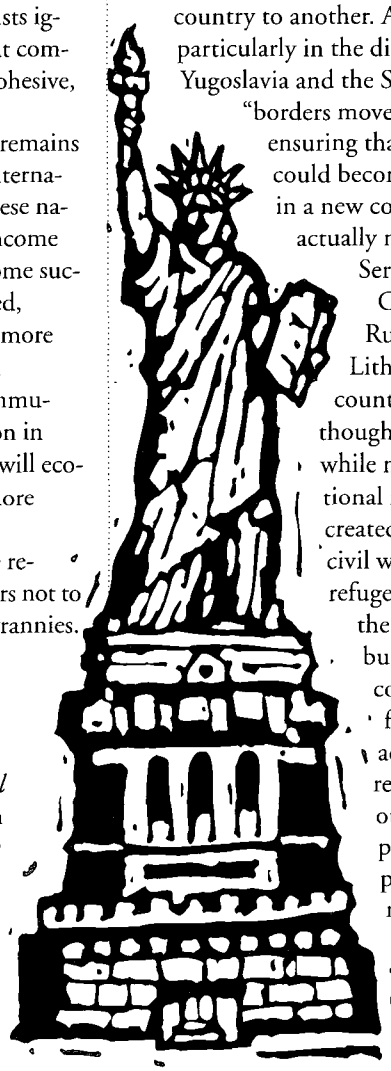
Growth, Peace, and Immigration

Philip Martin and Jonas Walgren, "International Migration: A Global Challenge," in Population Bulletin *(April 1996), Population Reference Bureau, 1875 Connecticut Avenue N.W., #520, Washington, D.C. 20009.*

Since French social critic Jean Raspail's novel *The Camp of the Saints* appeared in 1975, many observers have feared that only strict controls on immigration can prevent a horde of poor Third Worlders from submerging the wealthy West in a tidal wave of misery. Martin, an economist at the University of California (Davis), and Walgren, director of the International Center for Migration Policy Development, suggest that international migration is not as serious a problem as foes of immigration make it out to be.

Though international migration has reached an all-time high, only about 125 million people, or 2 percent of the world's population, live in a nation other than their birthplace. Even in Mexico and the Philippines, two nations where migration is most common, "over 90 percent of the people born in these two countries still live there."

About half of the world's migration consists of people moving from one poor country to another. And sometimes, particularly in the disintegration of Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union, "borders move across people," ensuring that "a person could become a 'foreigner' in a new country without actually moving." The Serbs who live in Croatia or the Russians in Lithuania now count as migrants, though they stayed put while new international frontiers were created. Other times, civil war ensures that refugees flee, not to the wealthy West, but to neighboring countries. Iran, for example, has accepted more refugees than any other nation, simply because it plays host to 2.2 million Afghanis. In 1994, there were five times as many refugees in



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Iran as there were in Germany, the Western nation with the most generous asylum policies.

Migration from poor to rich nations is increasing, largely because the cost of global transportation has fallen steadily. Indentured servants who came to America in the seventeenth century spent from three to five years paying their transatlantic passage. Today, air fare to New York or Frankfurt, even for an unskilled Third World worker, is little more than one month's wages. But the percentage of foreigners living and working in wealthy nations remains relatively small.

The best way to check immigration flows, Martin and Walgren contend, is to make poor countries wealthier, through trade and carefully controlled aid programs. They warn legislators not to try drastic solutions to immigration, such as massing troops on frontiers or sending armies to quash Third World civil wars. "Most migration is analogous to water dripping, not floods," they write, "and durable solutions to 'drip migration' lie in economic growth and peace."

SCIENCE AND ENVIRONMENT

The World Is No Web

Michael S. Greve, The Demise of Environmentalism in American Law. *AEI Press, 1150 17th Street N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.*

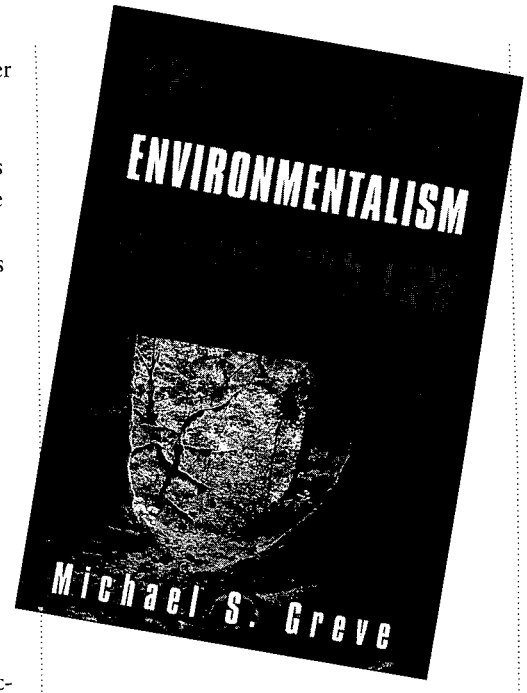
According to environmentalist Barry Commoner, the first law of ecology is that "everything is connected to everything else." Kill a Chinese butterfly and you may cause the death of an ecosystem. This notion of the world as a web was the philosophical ground for many important environmental laws, such as the Endangered Species Act of 1973.

Greve, executive director of the Center for Individual Rights, argues that recent decisions in the federal courts have ensured that this environmentalist view has been superseded. "It cannot be right," he argues, "that everyone has standing to make unlimited claims on everyone else's private possessions."

If the public-law theorists succeed in erasing traditional property rights in favor of "public values," Greve argues, environmental laws would have to be enforced by a massive system of "value-driven regulation" that "requires standards and prescriptions for the minutest details of production." An example of this sort of approach is found in the Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990, which mandate specifications for every valve and pipe at all factories in the United States. Moreover, replacing solid rules with "disembodied, transcendental values that have no operational content" would give judges very little grounds for determining the legal merits of any particular suit.

As environmental regulations become ever more complex, almost all decisions are promptly challenged by environmental groups. Over the past decade 80 percent of the rulings of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) have been challenged by environmentalists. Moreover, as the EPA cracks down on one form of pollution, new pollutants emerge, which prompt more regulations and more lawsuits. The Clean Air Act, for example, mandates smokestack scrubbers to filter emissions. But these scrubbers produce toxic sludge, which the EPA has had to exempt from federal regulations to ensure that the utility industry is not shut down by environmental regulators.

The courts have critiqued this environmentalist paradigm in several ways. One method is to increase restrictions on who can sue. In contrast to a 1973 Supreme Court case permitting students to sue the Interstate Commerce Commission because higher railroad freight rates supposedly reduced the students' enjoyment of a local public park, the courts now restrict plaintiffs to those who might actually be harmed by an environmental problem.



The Supreme Court struck a second blow against environmental legal theory with *Lucas* v. *South Carolina Coastal Council* (1991). By ruling that South Carolina could not block Mr. Lucas from building a house on his beachfront property, the Court repudiated "the ecological assumption that the interconnectedness of all things justifies prohibitions on even the most traditional land uses."

In the future, Greve writes, "a historian of twentieth-century social movements may conclude that environmentalism's demise circa 1992 was a foregone conclusion." Americans, he believes, have become increasingly disenchanted with a movement that began with the noble goals of protecting the air and water and now appears obsessed with harassing small businessmen and landowners. The courts, then, will continue to reduce environmentalists' ability to sue and block the use of private property.

"The judicial demise of the environmental paradigm merits a cheer, perhaps two," Greve writes. "The courts have reminded us of the costs of an unconstrained political process and reined in the worst excesses."

We welcome submissions of reports, articles, or papers you think should be summarized in THE DIGEST. Please send to P.O. Box 8093, Silver Spring, MD 20907.

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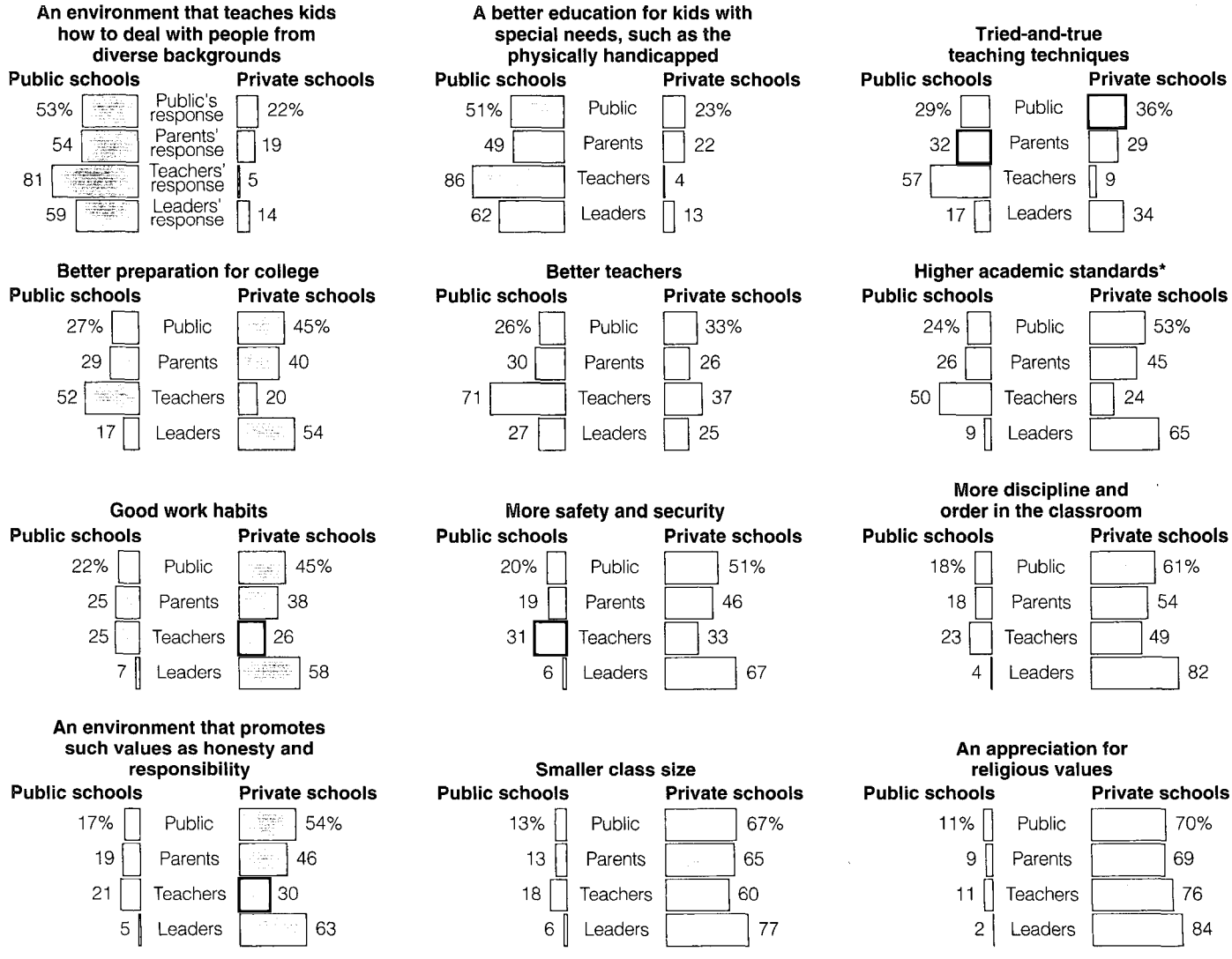
Opinion Pulse

EDITED BY KARLYN BOWMAN

PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SCHOOLS COMPARED

Public Agenda asked the public, parents, public school teachers, and community leaders to contrast public and private schools. In areas involving academic rigor and discipline, the public, parents, and community leaders consistently picked private over public schools; in areas involving exposure to diverse student bodies and special student needs, public schools excelled. Community leaders generally tended to take a dimmer view of public schools than the other groups did. And all four groups rated private schools as far more likely to foster honesty, responsibility, and respect for religion.

Question: **Now I'm going to ask you to compare your community's public schools and the (private non-religious, Catholic, Christian) schools. In your area, which schools are generally more likely to provide...?**



Note: For leaders, the category "Higher academic standards" read "Higher academic expectations." Teachers in this sample are public school teachers. The leaders' survey was a mail survey. The leaders' sample included 417 administrators and decision-makers in local public schools, 261 in the economic area, 165 from the political sector, 207 civic leaders, and 101 from other areas.
Source: Surveys by Public Agenda, May 1995.

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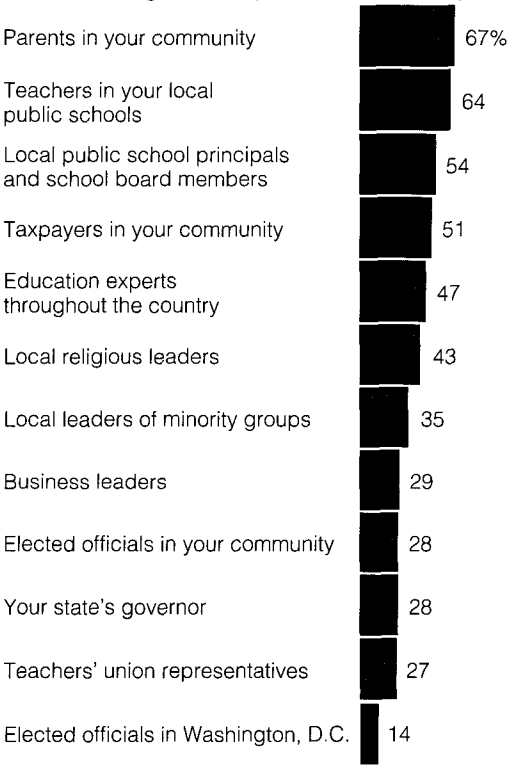
SKEPTICISM ABOUT WASHINGTON'S ROLE IN EDUCATION

The data below show that the widespread lack of confidence in Washington extends to education policy. Elected officials in Washington are ranked dead last in terms of groups that the public trusts to handle decisions about how public schools should be run. When compared to parents, educators, state governments, or corporations, the federal government is seen as least likely to improve the education system. People want state and local governments to have more say in determining education policy.

Question: **I'm going to name some people, and I'd like you to tell me how much you would trust each of them to make decisions about how the public schools in your community should be run. Please use a scale of 1 to 5...**

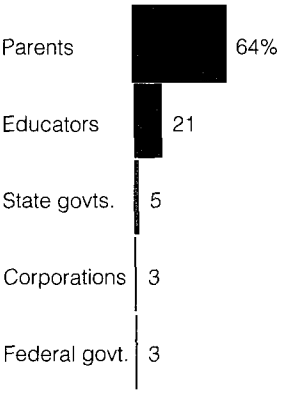
Would trust a great deal (score 4 or 5 on a 5–point scale)



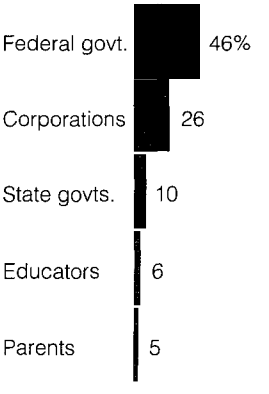
Source: Survey by CRC Information Systems, Inc. for Public Agenda, August 8–14, 1994.

Question: **Which of these, in your opinion, will be...?**

Most effective in improving the educational system in the U.S.

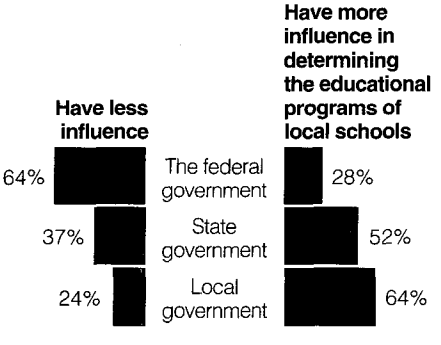


Least effective in improving the educational system in the U.S.

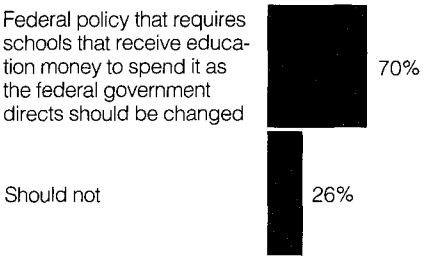


Source: Survey by Wirthlin Worldwide, September 22–25, 1995.

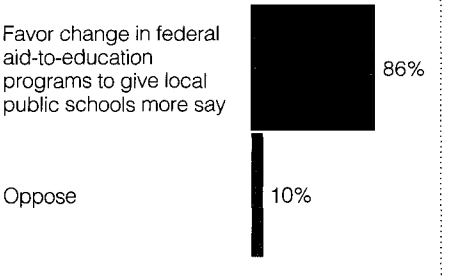
Question: **Thinking about the future would you like to see the...**



Question: **When the federal government appropriates money for educational programs, it usually requires the schools that receive this money to spend it as the federal government directs. Should...?**



Question: **Last year, federal aid-to-education programs were changed to give the local public schools more say, in exchange for bringing students to higher levels of academic achievement. Do you...?**



Source: Surveys by the Gallup Organization for Phi Delta Kappa, May 25–June 15, 1995.

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ISSUES 1996

Recent surveys by the Gallup Organization and the Pew Research Center provide an excellent snapshot of public views on a wide variety of issues. The data below do not tell us how important an issue will be on Election Day, but they do give us a good idea of how people would "vote" if given the opportunity. On the issues that fall easily into "conservative" or "liberal" categories, the public looks, on balance, conservative.

Question: **Please tell me whether you would vote for or against each of the following propositions...**

For or Against...	For	Against
Allowing Christmas nativity scenes and Christmas carols in public schools during the holidays*	90%	8%
A Constitutional amendment to require a balanced federal budget	83	14
Raising the minimum wage from $4.25 to $5.15 an hour	83	15
A law establishing English as the official language of the U.S.	82	16
Life imprisonment without parole for major drug dealers	80	17
The death penalty for persons convicted of murder	79	18
Allowing public schools to provide students with information on birth control methods*	78	22
A Constitutional amendment to limit the number of terms which members of the U.S. House and the Senate can serve	74	23
A Constitutional amendment to permit prayer in the public schools	73	25
A reduction in the size and budget of all government agencies	71	23
Cutting off federal welfare benefits to people who have not found a job or become self-sufficient after two years	71	24
A law requiring private companies to retrain employees who lose their jobs to mergers and downsizing	69	25
A law which would allow doctors to end a patient's life by some painless means if the patient and the family request it	68	29
A system giving parents government-funded school vouchers to pay for tuition at the public, private, or religious school of their choice	59	37
A law that would require that the Biblical doctrine of creationism be taught along with evolution in public schools	58	36
A law that would make it illegal to perform a specific abortion procedure conducted in the last six months of pregnancy known as "partial birth abortion," except in cases necessary to save the life of the mother	57	39

For or Against...	For	Against
A law which would make it illegal to manufacture, sell, or possess semi-automatic guns known as assault rifles	57%	42%
Restricting the sales of handguns*	53	45
A law that would stop almost all legal immigration into the U.S. for the next five years	50	46
Replacing the current federal income tax system with a flat tax system	49	39
Reducing federal spending for social programs, such as health, education, and welfare	42	54
Reducing federal spending for military and defense purposes	42	54
A law which would make all abortions illegal except in cases necessary to save the life of the mother	42	56
Re-establishing U.S. diplomatic relations with Cuba	40	49
Denying welfare benefits to unwed teenagers who have children*	36	56
Busing children to achieve better racial balance in public schools	34	62
Allowing gays and lesbians to marry legally*	27	65
Selling off public lands to private companies for exploration and development	24	70
The legalization of marijuana	24	73
The U.S. giving up its membership in the United Nations	17	77
A law which would allow your state to give preference in job hiring and school admission on the basis of race	14	83

Source: Surveys by the Gallup Organization, April 25–28, 1996 and the *Pew Research Center, May 31–June 9, 1996.

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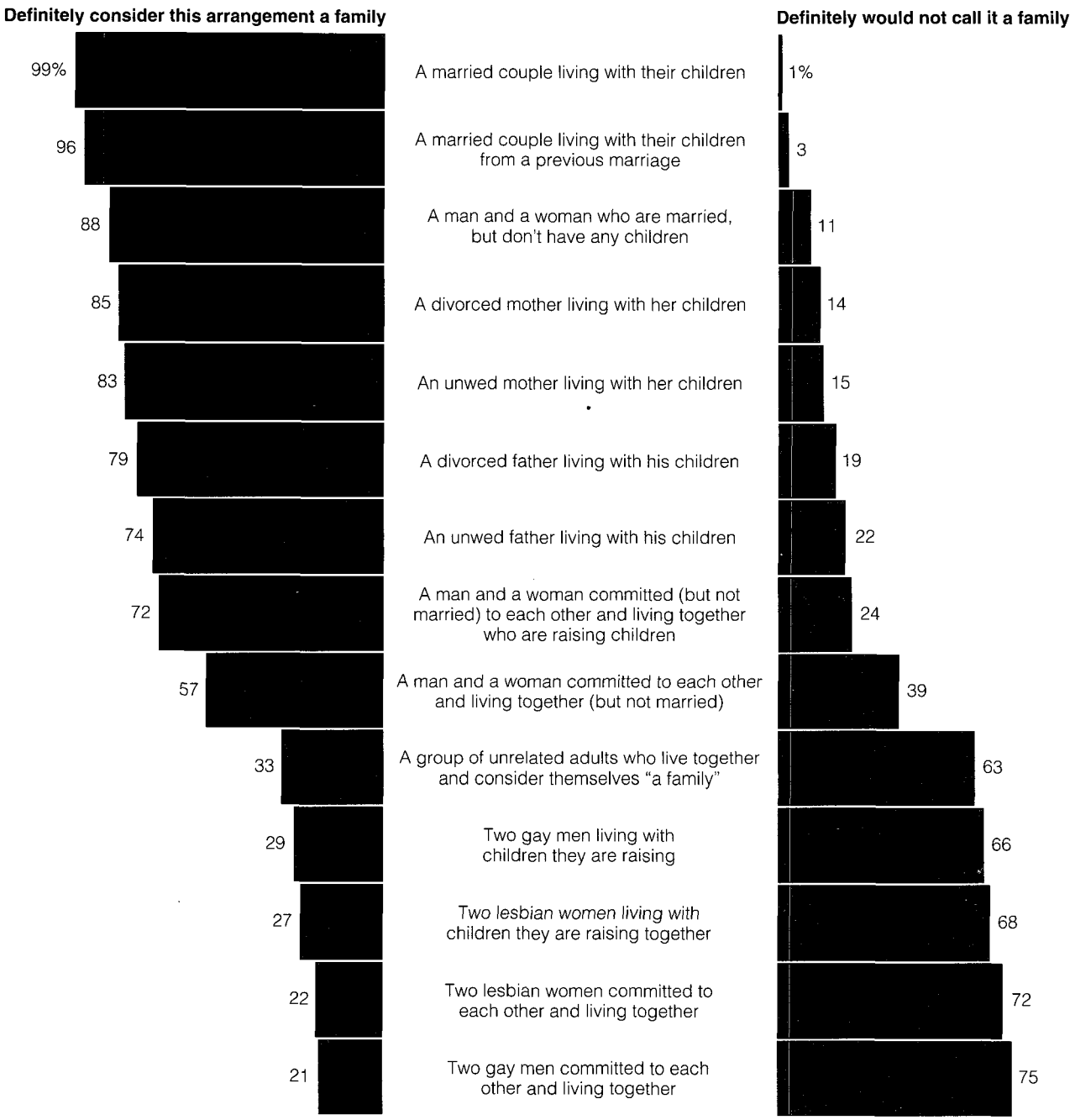
WHAT CONSTITUTES A FAMILY?

Roper Starch Worldwide recently asked people whether different kinds of living arrangements constituted "a family." The results, which varied little from ones given in 1992, are shown below. Large majorities say that divorced persons and unwed mothers and fathers living with their children are families, but fewer than three in ten call gay and lesbian living arrangements "a family."

Question: **You hear a lot today about the changing American family. I'd like to know your opinion on what a "family" is. For each of the following types of living arrangements, please tell me whether you definitely would call it a family, you definitely would not call it a family, or if you aren't sure.**



Source: Survey by Roper Starch Worldwide, February 3–17, 1996.

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THE NATIONAL INTEREST

Summer issue

Whether debating yesterday's triumphs. . .

How Reagan Did It
Richard V. Allen

Reagan's Critics
Stephen Knott

or today's problems. . .

The Republicans and Foreign Policy

"Whether on defense spending (more is better), China (gung-ho for Taiwan), Cuba (putting Dade County before the national interest), NATO (ready to die for Bratislava), Iran (an oxymoronic public advocacy of covert action), Mexico (keep them out), or international organizations (zero them out), Republican positions are, at best, distressingly lacking in nuance and, at their worst, conceptually unconvincing or impracticable."

Jonathan Clarke

it helps to know you read the Right stuff.

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the Mail

Michael Barone's article "High Anxiety" (July/Aug.) is yet another effort to lay today's maladies at the feet of the Baby Boomers. He states that ideas espoused by liberals at the leading edge of the Baby Boom generation have driven our moral decline. But he glosses over a crucial fact in one sentence: "the G.I. generation… suddenly ceded moral leadership and control of the country's value-setting institutions…to their children the Boomers—the earliest abdication of generational leadership in American history."

The liberalism that infiltrated our society during the infamous 1960s is illustrated in chapter 2 of Thomas Sowell's *Vision of the Anointed.* The cast of characters includes JFK, LBJ, Justice Earl Warren, psychiatrist Karl Menninger—but not one Baby Boomer.

Likewise, Barone decries 1.6 million annual abortions by 1980, yet the *Roe v. Wade* Supreme Court was populated by judges ranging from William O. Douglas (born 1898) to William Rehnquist (born 1924). Again, no Boomers here.

When I was raised in the 1950s the federal government got by just fine on 2 percent of what my dad made, and mom stayed home. The government now takes over 25 percent of what we earn, thanks in part to entitlement programs of the 1960s, whose primary beneficiaries are the World War II generation and the laziest of their kids. You cannot put this kind of economic pressure on the family and expect mom to stay home. You cannot pull mom out of the home for 40 (or more) hours a week and not expect parenting to suffer.

One of our kids was recently diagnosed with a recurring disabling disease. Even though the last two years brought unemployment or temporary employment to my husband, I will be working only out of my home. We will fill in the gaps with money intended for our old age, and put our faith in God. We cannot put our faith in government, as our parents did, because there is no Baby Boom generation to fund our security in old age.

Gloria Shank
Tacoma, Washington

The theme of your May/June issue, "It Takes a Marriage," was an effective counterpoint to the "It Takes a Village" chant of the Left. I suspect, though, that the latter is a wise saying which has been unfairly co-opted. After all, there is no hint in the words that the village is a surrogate for the family.

For all we know, the phrase means that the village is required *in addition* to a solid family. It seems unlikely that an ancient African proverb would mean to imply that "village" is some sort of social program. Could it be that the intended duty of the village is merely the uniform enforcement of discipline? That children need to know the rules apply even when parents are not present? I suspect that this interpretation may not be too popular with the current village advocates.

Tom Chresrand
Shoreview, Minnesota

Your May/June marriage issue was outstanding. I particularly enjoyed Michael Medved's "Banish the Honeymoon!" When I was married 20 years ago, I thought it was such a waste of time and resources for all our relatives and friends to sacrifice their time and energy for a 45-minute service and a 90-minute reception. My wife and I had such a wonderful time visiting that we were literally the last to leave. Since then, I have always thought a several-day wedding feast would be far more appropriate.

Dr. Stan Leland
San Antonio, Texas

Congratulations to Ben Stein for articulating what American women have known for generations: The responsibilities of motherhood are all consuming ("My Family Values," May/June).

In my grandparents' day, the importance of a wife's role as mother, cook, educator, homemaker, etc. was idealized in America. Reciprocally, as the head of the household, a husband was informed about current affairs and local politics as he fulfilled his obligation as provider and citizen. These are no mean tasks. American economic growth after the Second World War has been attributed to this traditional understanding of the family. Adam Smith got it right with division of labor and specialization. Motherhood to the exclusion of all else is a role to which a woman is uniquely predisposed by nature and temperament. Quiescence is not the solution for raising young citizens or improving civil society.

Lisa Richardson
Denver, Colorado

CORRECTIONS: In the July/August ECONOMIST, George Yin was identified as the author of *Taxing America* (NYU Press). In fact, he is the author of a chapter in that book, from which his article was adapted. In John Hinderaker and Scott Johnson's "Inequality," the annual income cut-off for the top 5 percent of families was inaccurately given. The correct figure is $198,336 and above.

The American Enterprise welcomes your comments. Send to "The Mail," The American Enterprise, 1150 17th Street N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036. Or fax to (202) 862-7178. Or e-mail 75272.1226@compuserve.com. Please include your address and phone number. Published letters may be edited for length and clarity.

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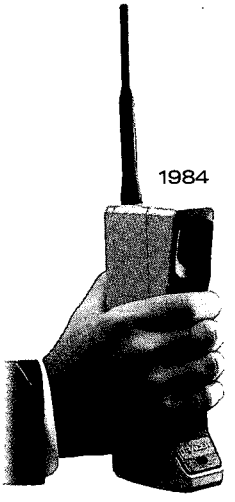
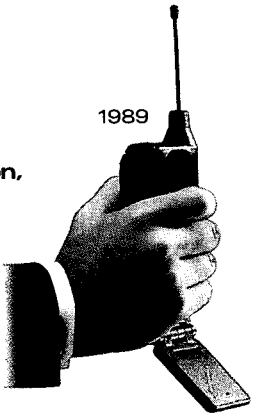
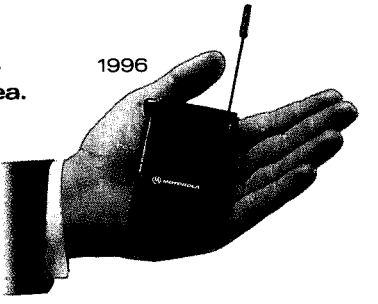


and portable cellular communication,



and personal cellular communication,

had another little idea.



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